The Socialist Revolutionary Party played an important role in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. The author seeks to explain why this party—which continued the tradition of the 1870s—did not ultimately prevail in an agrarian country like the Tsarist empire. Using a wealth of printed sources and, for the first time, drawing upon materials from the archive of the Central Committee of the PSR, this study provides a detailed analysis of the theoretical foundations of the party as well as its organisational structure and political practice during the first Russian Revolution.

St. Martin's Press
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010
Printed in Germany

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398

EP 967

Hildermeier The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party

Manfred Hildermeier

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St. Martin Press
New York

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LIT VERLAG

St. Martin's Press, New York

First published in Germany by

LIT VERLAG

Grevener Str. 179 D-48159 Münster

First published in the United States of America 2000 by

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC.

Scholary and Reference Division,

175 Fifth Avenue,

New York, N. Y. 10010

ISBN: 0-312-23630-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hildermeier, Manfred.

The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party before the First world war / by Manfred Hildermeier

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-312-23630-1

1. Partâëi soëiâalistov-revolëiëiâonerov--History. 2. Socialism--Russia--History--20th century. 3. Populism--Russia--History--20th century. 4. Russia--Politics and government--1894-1917. I. Title.

JN6598.P3 H55 2000

324.247'02--dc21

00-033316

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Printed in Germany

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Preface to the English Edition

It certainly would appear to be quite presumptuous, after more than twenty years have passed (and, in conceptual terms, closer to three decades), to republish one's first scholarly monograph. I must say that there would be no need for a German reprint: the text is readily available, as it appeared in 1978, and can either be read or disregarded. But there is no translation into English or any other foreign language. For all their criticisms and reservations, well-meaning specialists and friends from the Anglophone world deem it desirable that this work be available in English. Although the German edition certainly received ample attention (as the many reviews indicate), a translation will of course greatly enhance its accessibility. On several occasions in the last dozen or so years, an English edition seemed very close to realization, but each time proved elusive because of the length of the book and hence the principal obstacle – the high cost of translation. Just as efforts to arrange an English edition went for naught, I had the good fortune of having a native speaker, Michael R. Heydenburg, serve as my research assistant. At one point, when this young researcher had to bridge several months before assuming a position in the United States, I gave him the task of preparing a rough translation of the text. Then a close colleague and good friend, Gregory Freeze, thoroughly reviewed and stylistically edited the initial translation. And now a publishing house has agreed to print the book, which could not have been published without the invaluable help and technical knowledge of my research assistent David Feest. But, of course, in the last resort the reader must judge whether this undertaking has justified itself and not come too late.

As always in cases where a lengthy interval of time has passed since the original publication, the author must decide whether the text should or can appear in its initial form. Despite some reservations, I have chosen – like most authors – not to prepare a new edition. The principal reason was the obvious fact that this book cannot be simply "revised": one would no longer write such a book or, at least, one would do so in an entirely different form. The text thus stands as it first appeared; it bears the mark of its time, just as an automobile from 1975 (when the manuscript was completed) does. Today, one would no longer formulate the principal questions as it was then done, but rather would operate within a different conceptual framework. To rewrite this book would require one to seek different sources or at least read the old ones from a different perspective. Moreover, if such a thoroughly revised and reconceptualized book were to have the requisite consistency, it would have to give attention to different thematic dimensions and have a new structure of presentation and argumentation. In short, a full revision would mean an entirely new book, which at present I neither can nor wish to do. There is a further consideration (which should not rank last for the historian): each book has its own history, a quality worth preserving in its own right. Only politicians must assert that what they utter today is identical to what they always meant. I have therefore settled on a compromise: to leave the text in its original form, but to address here the questions and insights that have emerged in the last quarter century.[1]

[1] As a supplement to the bibliography at the end of the book we refer to the following titles (except for titles on the years 1917-1922): A.L. Afanas'ev, Eserovskie organizatsii Sibiri v period revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. (chislennost', sostav, razmeshchenie), in: Neproletarskie partii Rossii v trekh revoliutsiiakh. 1989; N.D. Erofeev, Narodnye sotsialisty v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii. M. 1979; N.D. Erofeev, K voprosu o chislennost' i sostave partii eserov nakanune pervoi rossiiskoi revoliutsii, in: Neproletarskie partii Rossii v trekh revoliutsiiakh. M. 1989, S. 122-132; A. B. Sypchenko, Narodno-socialisticheskaja partija v 1907–1917 gg. Moskva 1999; A. Geifman, Thou Shalt Kill. Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917. Princeton 1993; R.A. Gorodnickij, Boevaia organizatsiia partii sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, 1909–1911. Moskva 1997; R.A. Gorodnickij, Yegor Sozonov: Mirovozzrenie i psikhologiia esera-terrorista, in: Otechestvennaia istoriia 1995 No. 5, pp. 168–174; K.V. Gusev, Rytsari terrora. M. 1992; K.V. Gusev, Eserovskaja bogorodica. M. 1992; H. Immonen, The Agrarian Program of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party, 1900–1914. Helsinki 1988; N.I. Kanishcheva; M.I. Leonov; D.B. Pavlov; and others, Politicheskie partii Rossii v 1905–1907 godakh. (Obzor noveishei nemarksistskoi istoriografii), in: Istoriia SSSR (1989) No. 6, pp. 180–196; D.A. Kolesnichenko, Trudoviki v period pervoi rossiiskoi revoliutsii. M. 1985; D.A. Kolesnichenko, V.M. Chernov, in: Rossiia na rubezhe vekov: Istoricheskie portrety. 1991; D.A. Kolesnichenko, Vserossiiskii Krest'ianskii Soiuz v 1905–1907 godakh. 1995; M.I. Leonov, Levoe narodnichestvo v nachale proletarskogo etapa osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia v Rossii. Kuibyshev 1987; M.I. Leonov, Chislennost' i sostav partii eserov v 1905–1907 gg., in: Politicheskie partii v period revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. Kolichestvennyi analiz. M. 1987, pp. 48–96; M.I. Leonov, Partiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov v 1905–1907 gg. Moskva 1997; M.I. Leonov, Partiia eserov v 1905–1907 gg.: organizatsionnaia struktura, sostav, chislennost', in: Neproletarskie partii Rossii v trekh revoliutsiiakh. 1989; M.I. Leonov, Esery i krest'ianstvo Povolzh'ia v revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg, in: Klassovaia bor'ba v Povolzh'e v 1905–1907 gg.; M.I. Leonov, Iz istorii obrazovaniia partii eserov, in: Voprosy istorii SSSR. 1972;

At the same time, I shall also take this opportunity to consider issues raised by reviewers when this book first appeared.[2]

Thus, some reviewers raised objections to my account of agitation by Social Revolutionaries (SRs) among the workers.[3] These reviewers argued that it would be

M.I. Leonov, Esery v revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. Samara 1992; M.I. Leonov, Esery i II Duma, in: Voprosy istorii (1997) No. 2, pp. 18–33; M.I. Leonov (ed.), Avtobiografiia V.M. Chernova. 1907 g., in: Istoricheskii arkhiv (1996) No. 4, pp. 214–217; M. Melancon, "Marching Together!": Left Bloc Activities in the Russian Revolutionary Movement, 1900 to February 1917, in: Slavic Review 49 (1990), pp. 239–252; M. Melancon, "Stormy Petrels": The Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia's Labor Organisation 1905–1914. Pittsburgh 1988; M. Melancon, "Athens or Babylon"?: The Birth and Development of the Revolutionary Parties in Saratov, 1890–1905, in: R.A. Wade, S.J. Seregny (ed.), Politics and Society in Provincial Russia: Saratov 1590– 1917. Columbus/Ohio 1989; M. Melancon, The Socialist Revolutionaries from 1902 to February 1917: A Party of the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. Ph.D.Diss Indiana University 1984; M. Melancon, The Socialist Revolutionaries from 1902 to 1908. Peasant and Worker's Party, in: Russian History 12 (1985), pp. 2–47; M. Melancon, The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Russian Anti-War Movement, 1914–1917. Columbus 1990; K.N. Morozov, Partiia sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov v 1907– 1914 gg. Moskva 1998; K.N. Morozov (ed.), Individual'nyi politicheskii terror v Rossii XIX–nachalo XX v. Materialy konferentsii. Moskva 1996; Partiia sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. Dokumenty i materialy, 1900–1922 gg. T. 1: 1900–1907. Red. N. D. Erofeev. Vol. 1, Moskva 1996; D.B. Pavlov (ed.), Pis'ma Azefa, in: VI (1993) No. 4–5, 8, pp. 100–13, 108–26, 119–37; D.B. Pavlov (ed.), Politicheskie partii Rossii konets XIX–pervaia tret' XX veka. Dokumental'noe nasledie. T. 1: Partiia "Sojuz 17 oktiabria". Protokoly s-ezdov i zasedanii TsK (1905-1907 gg.). Moskva 1996; D.B. Pavlov, Stranitsy istorii eserov-maksimalistov, in: Voprosy istorii (1988) No 5, pp. 85–101; D.B. Pavlov, Rossijskaja kontrrazvedka v gody russko-japonskoi voiny, in: OI (1996) No. 1, pp. 14–28; D.B. Pavlov (ed.), Tainaia voina protiv Rossii. Iz dokumentov russkoi kontrrazvedki 1904-1905 gg, in: IA (1994) No. 3, pp. 13–59; D.B. Pavlov, Z.I. Peregudova (eds.), Pis'ma Azefa: 1893–1917. Moskva 1994; Politicheskaia istoriia Rossii v partiiakh i litsakh. Tom 2. Moskva 1994; D.B. Pavlov, Esery- Maksimalisty v pervoi Rossiiskoi Revolutsii. Moskva 1989; D.B. Pavlov; S.A. Petrov, Japonskie den'gi i russkaia revoliutsiia, in: Tainy russko-japonskoi voiny. 1993; D.B. Pavlov; S.A. Petrov, Polkovnik Akasi i osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Rossii (1904–1905 gg.), in: Istoriia SSSR (1990) No. 6, pp. 50–71; B. Savinkov, Vospominaniia Terrorista. 2nd ed., M. 1991; B. Savinkov, Erinnerungen eines Terroristen. Nördlingen 1985; S.D. Sazonov, Vospominaniia. Moskva 1991; N. Schleifman, Undercover Agents in the Russian Revolutionary Movement. The SR Party, 1902–14. London 1988; R. Spence, Boris Savinkov: Renegade on the Left. Boulder 1991; K. Wedziagolski, Boris Savinkov: Portrait of a Terrorist. Kingston 1988; A.I. Zevelev (ed.), Istoriia politicheskikh partii Rossii. Moskva 1994; A. Motojiro, Rakka ryusui. Colonel Akashi's Report on His Secret Cooperation with the Russian Revolutionary Parties during the Russo-Japanese War. Helsinki 1988.

[2] M. Melancon, in: Slavic Review 41 (1982), pp. 546–48; J.L.H. Keep, in: Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 29 (1981), pp. 273–75; R. Wortman, in: Journal of Modern History 52(1980), pp. 739–41; T. von Laue, in: Russian History 7 (1980), pp. 379f.; A. Ascher, in: Russian Review 39 (1980), pp. 247f.; M. Raeff, in: Revue canadienne-americaine d'études Slaves 14 (1980), pp. 560f.; A. Kappeler, in: Schweizer Zeitschrift für Geschichte 30 (1980), p. 271; I. Avakumovich, in: American Historical Review 85 (1980), pp. 946f.; W.H. Roobol, in: Tijdschrift vor Geschiedenis 94/1 (1981), pp. 306–308; M. Hellmann, in: Osteuropa 31 (1981), pp. 606f.; G. Voigt, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte der sozialistischen Länder Europas 26/2 (1983), pp. 197–199; H. Haumann, in: Neue Politische Literatur 28 (1983), pp. 524f.; M. Hagen, in: Historische Zeitschrift 234 (1982), pp. 731–33; K. Meyer, in: Zeitschrift für Ostforschung 32 (1983), pp. 578f.

[3] Cf. particularly Melancon, "Stormy Petrels", pp. 2ff.; ibid., The Socialist Revolutionaries from 1902 to 1907, pp. 41ff.

wrong to treat the Party of Social Revolutionaries (PSR) as the political spearhead of an agrarian social protest and fanatical intelligentsia who expected salvation from a peasant uprising. Although "socialization of the land" was the PSR's trademark and calling card, its members and supporters did not correspond precisely to this narrow label: to judge from the origins of activists, the PSR was as much a workers' party as its primary competitor, the Social Democracy. In the final analysis, the PSR even had greater social heterogeneity; as the party asserted in its program, it was the only revolutionary party to speak for all strata of the exploited.

I not only agree with this assessment, but do not find it at variance from the account offered in my own work. On the contrary, one of my main findings was the fact that the PSR found "found mass support in the working class and that workers joined its organization."[4] As proof for this thesis, at the time I was the first researcher (to the best of my knowledge) to incorporate an analysis of the elections for the St. Petersburg workers' curia. That election produced such extraordinary results that even Lenin felt obliged to make a commentary. From the perspective of "proletarian socialism" that the Social Democrats claimed to embody, the fact that the PSR garnered the most votes precisely in the large factories was tantamount to a sharp slap in the face. All this provided proof (as I tried to formulate as clearly as possible) for the great sympathy that the SRs enjoyed among urban workers during the Revolution of 1905–7. Chris Rice, in particular, has since assembled further evidence for this very same point.[5]

How one interprets these findings is another matter, however. On the one hand, one can no longer sustain the earlier thesis (advanced by A.M. Pankratova, D. Lane, and others) that the PSR succeeded in attracted primarily "peasant" workers-that is, those backward workers still in the process of becoming "true" proletarians.[6] On the other hand, the SRs remained skeptical of "economic" trade-union agitation, gave clear priority to "political" propaganda, and in general proved highly attractive to workers "with a perceived interest and stake in the solution of the land question."[7] But there is some reason to hold that the support of the large factories in St. Petersburg may also be connected with the fact that these large factories contained concentrations of new recruits for the industrial labor force. Nevertheless, one is well advised to regard this whole formulation of the problem as myopic and misleading. Namely, in the last decade greater importance has been assigned to consciousness, experience, and mentalité; ever since E.P. Thompson's classic,[8] one can no longer as-

[4] See below, p. 282.
[5] Cf. Rice, Russian Workers, pp. 71ff., pp. 199ff.
[6] Cf. Rice, Russian Workers, p. 199.
[7] Cf. ibid., pp. 200, p. 206.
[8] Thompson, Making.

sume a direct link between "social condition" and political attitudes and general outlook. Reality was more complicated; the motives behind the decision to support the PSR were exceedingly complex and heterogeneous. Given the "paradigm-change" that has since overtaken the historiography, one should approach this question more from a cultural than a social perspective, therefore making it incumbent to pay close attention to the "integrating" effects of SR propaganda. At the very least, one must take into account the most diverse factors, not just "material" interests, in determining temporary or long-term affiliation. That approach stands in marked contrast to what has hitherto been assumed and known.

More in need of revision is, certainly, my attempt to construct the "social profile" of the PSR (Chapter 9). Because of the restrictions on access to sources that then prevailed, I was able to assemble data only on 942 party members; moreover, information on a third of this group was incomplete. I was of course aware that this statistical base did not suffice for any conclusions about the rank-and-file membership of the PSR; indeed, I began with the assumption that this database contained a strong bias in favor of the party élite. My analysis, however, attempted to take this factor into account, chiefly by incorporating control data (above all, the data assembled by M. Perrie),[9] and by giving priority to the educational and generational structure. My distinction among different political generations has since been confirmed in the most recent and most substantial monographs by the leading specialist, M.I. Leonov, and his younger colleague, K.N. Morozov.[10] My findings about the qualification structure (with the exception of data about the "party base") also appear to prove right; in any event, I am not aware of any alternative analysis. The same holds for another principal finding – the distinct over-representation of the intelligentsia. To be sure, as Leonov plausibly suggests, this intelligentsia- predominance may not be true for the party as a whole. But he himself confirms that the intelligenty comprised its leading personnel and had a firm hold on the party as an organization.[11]

A separate issue is the profile of rank-and-file members. In this case, I am happy to concede that my earlier calculations have been superceded and that a much clearer picture now obtains. To be sure, the criticism that the author "should have deemed it necessary"[12] to use provincial archives is totally inane: at the time when this monograph was written, it was simply impossible to gain access to local repositories in the Soviet Union. Hence, the data on more than 15,000 SRs that Leonov, in the course of decades, has assembled are undoubtedly more representative. In fact, his regionally differentiated results produce a very different picture: in twenty-one

[9] Cf. Perrie, Social Composition.
[10] Leonov, PSR, pp. 67ff.; Morozov, PSR, pp. 110f.
[11] Leonov, PSR, pp. 60f.
[12] Leonov, PSR, p. 60.

provinces, the PSR membership was comprised of 43 percent workers, 45 percent peasants, and 11.6 percent intelligenty.[13] According to his data for several provinces in the northwest, the central industrial region, and the Urals (Smolensk, Tula, and Viatka), the party consisted of 35.4 percent workers, 42 percent peasants, and 16.7 percent intelligenty; for the agricultural provinces on the Volga, peasants comprised more than 50 percent of the members, with the balance coming from the workers (35.4 percent) and intelligenty (10 to 14 percent).[14] The basic thrust of these data is quite clear; indeed it is only natural to expect that workers and peasants comprised the great majority of party members. To be sure, these data – given the demographic proportions of the total population – mean that the peasants were still strongly underrepresented, a point that confirms my thesis about the limited capacity of the PSR to reach and organize the highly dispersed villagers. Hence the PSR, like all the other parties, had its main strength in the cities.[15] At the same time, it is also imperative to consider precisely whom the SR committees regarded as a "member." The numerous reports from local organizations to the Central Committee, which were used and assessed in my own study (Chapter 7), allow one to draw only one conclusion: the PSR did not have even a roughly consistent criterion, meaning that its figures on membership were neither precise nor stable. Hence it is only in the case of "activists" that one can begin to speak of a "stable" party nexus. But the circle of activists was much smaller and did not substantially exceed the rank order offered in my sample.

The numerical strength of the PSR and its ties to the working class also raise the question of the SR presence in the years of reaction after 1907. At the time, I began with the assumption that the party organization inside Russia had largely collapsed, a conclusion that derived primarily from the reports of the local SR committees and the discussions in the party leadership. The information coming from Russia was unambiguous. On the basis of such reports (confirmed by delegates to the first – and only – "full party conference" of the PSR which convened in London in August 1908), that conference itself acknowledged the breakdown and sought to do what it could to keep the party together. To be sure, their efforts were foiled by a blow that could hardly have been more damaging: the revelation, in December, that its chief terrorist was an agent of the secret police. The fifth party council of May 1909 (the complete protocols of which – given their significance – deserve to be published in full) attempted to rebuild what was left of the party. However, it was unable to prevent a mounting conflict between the two wings of the party and the split between the right-wing (Pochintsy) and left (the new Maximalists), a conflict that intensified during World War I and culminated in a formal split in November 1917.

[13] Cf. Leonov, Chislennost', in: Politicheskie partii, pp. 54f.
[14] Cf. Leonov, PSR, pp. 60f.
[15] Cf. also Leonov, PSR, p. 400.

Some have objected that this interpretation, to a large degree, reflects a distorted source base. Namely, the materials from the archive of the Central Committee (in the Institute for International Social History in Amsterdam) pertain primarily to the revolutionary years of 1905–1907; they shed relatively little light on the following years for the obvious reason that the exile leadership failed to receive reports about events that, in spite of everything, were still unfolding in Russia.[16] As evidence, a multitude of other documents have been cited to support the contrary conclusion: it was precisely at this point that "in many cities" the Social Revolutionaries reached "the apogee of their influence," not the nadir (as customarily had been assumed). Before 1912, when the workers' movement once again gained momentum (in the wake of the shootings at Lena Goldfields), it was them who were Mensheviks' chief adversary and who first were able to challenge their supremacy.[17] SRs were active, overtly or covertly, not only in trade-union professional organizations, but also in a multitude of other spheres (such as cooperatives, associations for assistance, and various other organizations), so that – and here was the implicit conclusion – there was no break in the continuity of its propaganda and underground activity up to the war and beyond.

I not only agree with this argument but find that the evidence for continuing SR presence in diverse associations of a "workers' public" (trudovaia obshchestvennost'), in the language of one newspaper, enlarges and enhances our understanding. But I regard this objection – apart from the fundamental problem of relying mainly on propagandistic sources like Znamia truda and the like – not as a contradiction to the account in my book, but rather only as a somewhat different emphasis (if not simply complementary). The fact that, even in trade unions, there were non-SD activists, inspired the Pochintsy to demand a rejection of terror and conspiracy. In their view, legal activity (based on a program oriented toward democratization) should promote a broad engagement that would be more populist than social-revolutionary and that would again transpire under the aegis of the PSR. They were all too aware (as their publications made clear) that the party as an organization lay in ruins and that sympathizers, who in some fashion were still active, had been left to fend for themselves. And herein lay the dilemma (and indeed a contrast to the Social Democracy): the PSR no longer had a center to unify and coordinate the populist milieus.

Indeed, the most recent, comprehensive specialized monograph on these years speaks of an "actual disintegration of a unified party organization" after 1910.[18] Because the Pochintsy failed to prevail, a comrade-in-arms like Chaikovskii (who

[16] Cf. Melancon, "Stormy Petrels", p. 4.
[17] Cf. Melancon, "Stormy Petrels", p. 40 and pass.
[18] Cf. Morozov, SRP, p. 608.

played, as is well known, a significant role in the cooperative movement) had to wait until February 1917 before once again recognizing the PSR as a broad populist movement.

Apart from such factual matters, the main criticism of my account concerned its methods and interpretation. Above all, American reviewers (to be sure, no European reviewer) reproached me for having given so one-sided an interpretation and for having judged the Social Revolutionaries too harshly. Thus, these comments ranged from a more friendly formulation ("a restriction of historical purview," in R. Wortman's words) to more acerbic complaints about a "sociological determinism" (M. Melancon) and a "principal defect" in the form of a "foregone conclusion" (A. Ascher). In the view of these critics, my monograph denied the fundamental openness of Russia to follow a different line of development; contrary to my conception, they argued, an "agrarian-reformist and liberal" development was also conceivable. Indeed, as one reviewer (M. Raeff) wrote, an analysis of the prewar era could not lead to a better understanding of 1917 for the simple reason that "something entirely new and unforeseen" had occurred – the complete collapse of the structures of 1914. As the last quotation indicates, such objections derive from different conceptions about the causes of "Red October," a controversy that was then tied closely to differences in Weltanschauung, political views, and historiographical positions. Social history, which gained the upper hand in the mid-1960s, tends to emphasize long-term and structural factors. Unlike the earlier political history (which was strongly influenced by prerevolutionary historiography), this new social history therefore downplayed the significance of the war. The distance between 1905 and 1917 became shorter, and the evidence seemed increasingly to show that the end of tsarism could not be understood without attention to the reforms that had been imposed from above ever since 1861.

In this discussion of the early 1970s (which still continues and more recently revived under, so to say, reverse terms), I took the side of the "pessimists" and sought to substantiate this interpretation through a case study of the PSR. All things considered, I continue to uphold that interpretation. As before, it strikes me as too facile to ascribe the entire "blame" for the revolution to the war and to assert that the earlier political and social relations were fundamentally sound and healthy. Without the war (if indeed one can factor it out), the internal relations in Russia would no doubt have undergone a different development. But the fundamental problems had long existed: the social-economic questions at least since the industrialization surge under S.Iu. Witte, the political issues since the turn of the century and especially since the collapse of P.A. Stolypin's attempt to establish an unwritten quasi-constitutionalism. Therefore, Leopold Haimson's conception of a "double polarization" retains its fun-

damental plausibility.[19] While this conception should be tested with new methods and in new spheres, it cannot be ignored, at least until a better explanation is found. One may debate whether social history was too negative in evaluating the "chances for a liberal constitutionalism," but there were certainly serious impediments to the realization of this scenario. At any rate, it is still an open question whether – figuratively speaking – the glass for the development of a democratic civil society in Russia in 1914 was half full or half empty.

The manner in which I attempted to prove the modernization premises is quite another matter. In this respect, I gladly concede to the criticism (expressed from different perspectives) that I went too far. No doubt, in seeking to ensure the rigor of argumentation (which might be forgiven in one's first monograph), I tended to give a single interpretation where, in fact, other readings were possible. I looked for inconsistencies in the theoretical and programmatic declarations (above all, in the work of V. Chernov), and indeed found some. My thesis – viz., that such fissures derived, above all, from the marked heterogeneity of the Russian social and economic structure – still appears to me to be correct. That is, the SRs were no better prepared than the Social Democrats to deal with the coexistence of "worker" and "peasant" questions. However, one could have treated attempts to resolve these more positively and thereby treated them as the only possible way for Russia to avoid a test of its very capacity to survive. Similarly I examined the numerous reports from local committees principally for information about problems and disorders. To be sure, that approach still seems appropriate to me: since the "days of freedom" in 1905, there was no longer any talk about success. What was reported for internal use (and this was the bulk of my source material) differed substantially from the representations aimed at external consumption. But, of course, I might have more strongly emphasized that these internal reports had their own bias as well. On the basis of these and other selection of materials, the argumentation and its empirical basis produced a coherent picture (in any case, that has not been called into question), but one with excessively sharp contours and with a comparatively one-sided picture of events.[20] However, it is still an open question whether the sources permit another, more "fluid" picture. At the time, I was convinced that this was not the case. I attempted to channel this material toward an interpretation that, while inseparable from the basic paradigms of the existing conceptual framework, nonetheless was fully consistent with the data in the sources. An alternative attempt does not exist. Perhaps alternatives and successors will be found in Russia, where this subject is now of considerable interest.

[19] Cf. L.F. Haimson, The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905–1917, in: SR 23 (1964), pp. 619–642, 24 (1965), pp. 1–22.

[20] Cf. this charge in Leonov, PSR, p. 17.

Such reservations aside, all the reviews and more recent commentaries have – without exception – confirmed that this monograph presents fundamental new material. An accident gave me the opportunity, for the first time, to use the archive of the Central Committee of the PSR, which, after a long journey between Sofia and New York, finally turned up in Amsterdam. The chapters based on this material (3, 5–8, and 10) undoubtedly make up the core of this book. These chapters have lost none of their informational value, since the Amsterdam documents have not since been re-examined with comparable intensity and the post-Soviet scholars have only recently acquired a copy at the Russian Center for Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History (formerly the Central Party Archive) in Moscow.[21] Moreover, the rich empirical studies by Leonov do not replace, but rather complement my monograph through the inclusion of materials from Russian archives (above all, the State Archive of the Russian Revolution), access to which I was denied. This translation omits only chapter (13) about SR terror, which followed the account in B. Nikolaevskii and has since been surpassed by other studies.[22] In this sense I should like to hope that the translation, which otherwise does not differ from the original German text, at least has empirical value and can contribute to the task of each generation to write its own history anew.

Göttingen, Dec. 1999 Manfred Hildermeier

[21] Used for the first time by Morozov, PSR.

[22] Cf. B. Nikolaevsky, Aseff the Spy. Russian Terrorist and Police Stool. New York 1934, as well as the aforementioned works, especially A. Geifman, R.A. Gorodnicij and N. Schleifman.

Introduction

The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party (*Partiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*, PSR) is one of the losers of history. As a result of the October Revolution of 1917, it was driven from power by the Bolsheviks and soon banned. Thus the PSR lost its chance to work on the construction of the new state. The party leaders were degraded to "yesterday's people"[23] and had to emigrate. All efforts from a remote exile to push events in Russia in a socialist-revolutionary direction was like powerless shadowboxing. The inheritors of a great revolutionary tradition, the successors of A.I. Gertsen, P.L. Lavrov and N.K. Mikhailovskii, were condemned to that "rubbish heap of history" that L.D. Trotsky reserved for historical figures that have had their day. In the Soviet Union, their traces were extinguished, and historians of non-communist countries have also done little to keep their memory.[24] The history of the PSR was a victim of the one-sided interest in the victors, Social Democracy and especially the Bolsheviks. That one could learn much about the Revolution by studying the fate of the losers was barely considered.

Nevertheless, the downfall of the PSR should not obscure the great importance of this party in the Russian revolutionary movement. It was neither the liberal-bourgeois "Constitutional-Democrats" (Kadets),[25] despite their rich intellectual and

[23] See A.V. Lunacharskii, Byvshie liudi. Ocherki partii es-erov, (M., 1922).

[24] For literature about the PSR see the bibliographic Appendix III. The titles named in Appendix III will be cited in the text in short form.

[25] See, for example: G. Fischer, Russian Liberalism. From Gentry To.Intelligentsia (Cambridge, MA., 1958); S. Galai, The Liberation Movement in Russia 1900–1905 (New York-London, 1973); Ch.E. Timberlake (ed.), Essays On Russian Liberalism (Columbia, MO., 1972); W.G. Rosenberg, Liberals

political capability, nor even the right-leaning Octobrists,[26] with their ties to noble landowners and the conservative bourgeoisie, who were the real opponents of the Social Democrats in the opposition to autocracy. Rather, the primary foe of the Social Democrats was the Social Revolutionaries. The latter saw themselves not only as the restorers of Zemlia i Volia ("Land and Freedom") and Narodnaia Volia ("The People's Will"),[27] but also as comparable to their main rivals in terms of organizational strength and their influence on the masses. In the constant warfare between Social Democrats (SDs) and Social Revolutionaries (SRs), the old contest between Populists and Marxists that had split the Russian revolutionary movement since the 1880s reappeared again after 1902. In addition to the theoretical conflicts between Populists and Marxists during the 1890s over the future of capitalism in Russia came, the main issue was increasingly the concrete, practical difficulties of the daily revolutionary struggle.

Certainly, the fronts had shifted. Indeed, one could no longer seriously maintain that Russia could simply leap over the stage of capitalism, as V.P. Vorontsov had demanded earlier.[28] The basic positions remained, however, the same. Thus, the Social Democrats argued – the Mensheviks much more categorically than the Bolsheviks – for the complete development of capitalism after the West European model. They maintained that the Russian proletariat must be "unconditionally interested in the freest and fastest development of capitalism"[29] and, accordingly, they attempted to prove that capitalist relations had long determined the Russian economy, including the agricultural sector.[30]

By contrast, the Socialist Revolutionaries demanded the restriction of capitalism in industry and argued for the immediate transition to socialism. They assumed that this transition would be easier to realize if organized through the collective economic and social organization of the Russian village. The latter, they believed, still existed in the exemplary communal distribution system of the Russian commune – the *obshchina*.[31] In backward Russia, next to bourgeois capitalism and proletarian

in the Russian Revolution. The Constitutional Democratic Party 1971–1921 (Princeton, 1974).

[26] See, for example: E. Birth, Die Oktobristen (1905–1913). Zielvorstellungen und Struktur. Ein Beitrag zur russischen Parteiengeschichte (Stuttgart, 1974); G.A. Hosking, The Russian Constitutional Experiment. Government and Duma 1907–1914 (London, 1973); Ben-Cion Pinchuk, The Octobrists in the Third Duma, 1907–1912 (Seattle, 1974).

[27] See, in general: F. Venturi, The Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia (New York, 1966).

[28] V.V. [V.P. Vorontsov], Sud'by kapitalizma v Rossii. (SPb., 1882); Nikolai-on [N.F. Daniel'son], Ocherki nashego poreformennogo obshchestvennogo khoziaistva. (SPb., 1893).

[29] V.I. Lenin, "Dve taktiki Sotsial-demokratii v demokraticheskoi revoliutsii," in: V.I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, 5th ed. (cited as PSS), vol. 11, p. 37.

[30] See Lenin, "Razvitie kapitalizma v Rossii," in: PSS, vol. 3.

[31] For the origin and the history of the consequences of the "obshchina" see C. Goehrke, Die Theorien über Entstehung und Entwicklung des "Mir" (Wiesbaden, 1964); P.F. Laptin, Obshchina v russkoi

socialism, the populist agrarian socialism of the PSR presented a third, non-capitalist path of development and represented the most serious alternative to Social Democracy.

How the confrontation between Social Democracy and Neo-Populism[32] ended, is well known. O.H. Radkey has detailed the decisive phase between February 1917 and January 1918. It is astounding how easy it was for the Bolsheviks to outmaneuver the parties (the strongest party being the PSR) of the Provisional Government. Those who had the power of government in their hands were unable to organize effective resistance to the October revolt. Neither in Petrograd nor in Moscow, where the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1917 directed the city administration, could they organize a mass following. The SRs could not even fully count on the union that was, since the revolution of 1905, perhaps its most reliable social revolutionary bridgehead in the unions – the Railway Workers' Union. The lower echelons of this union sympathized with the Bolsheviks. Radkey concluded that the battle in the two capitals "confirmed the weaknesses of the PSR" and destroyed the illusion of the supposed incompetence of the Bolsheviks.[33]

In addition, the SRs were unable to form an opposition government and draw support away from the new regime by providing a workable political alternative. All their efforts failed because of the internal party conflicts that, since the spring, had seriously hindered the party's capacity to function. In November 1917, these conflicts led to a split with the left wing, which renamed itself the "Party of Left-Socialist Revolutionaries" (*Partiia Levykh Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*). The latter was even willing to enter a coalition with the new regime.[34] Unfortunately, this "purification crisis" did not lead to consolidation within the rest of the PSR, a party still rent by controversy. The main opponents of the Bolsheviks condemned themselves to inactivity, thereby leaving only the vague hope that the new rulers would somehow lose credibility and power through their own mistakes.[35]

The SRs became progressively less effective. They lost one provincial bastion of support after another, just as they earlier had lost support in the larger

istoriografii poslednei treti XIX-nachalo XX vv. (Kiev, 1971); V.A. Aleksandrov, Sel'skaia obshchina Rossii (XVIII–nachale XIX v.) (M., 1976); F.M. Waters, "The Peasant and the Village Commune," in: W.S. Vucinich (ed.), The Peasant in the Nineteenth Century Russia (Stanford, 1968), pp. 133–157.

[32] The term Neo-Populism will be used here as a synonym for the Social Revolutionary Party or movement. This term designates a political and intellectual current that consciously tied itself to the tradition of the Russian "narodnichestvo" and its theoretical and philosophical foundation. Thus, the term Neo-Populism will be used more restrictively than the term Populism.

[33] Radkey, Sickle, p. 61. For the political attitude of the train workers, see I.M. Pushkareva, Zheleznodorozhniki Rossii v burzhuazno-demokraticheskikh revoliutsiiakh. (M., 1975). Pushkareva clearly overestimates the resonance of the Bol'sheviki.

[34] Radkey, Sickle, p. 98; Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 152f; Gusev, Krakh partii levykh eserov.

[35] See Radkey, Sickle, p. 93.

cities. Even the peasants, once their most faithful supporters, now turned to the Left SRs.[36]

Hence a weakened neo-populist party entered the decisive battle with the new regime, when in January 1918 the Constituent Assembly met for the first time. The loss of mass support for the PSR, the party that nine months earlier had been the most popular, could now be seen more clearly than in the previous months. In January 1918, it was above all the supporters of the bourgeois political camp who were out on the streets and organized "basically a counterrevolutionary demonstration." Workers were few and, what was more fateful, the soldiers were reserved.[37] Since the very beginning of its history, the PSR fought for the Constituent Assembly; it was the institutional center of their understanding of the revolution and, indeed, the PSR sent the most delegates to the Assembly.[38] Nevertheless, the Constituent Assembly had no defenders, even in Saratov, Samara, and other SR strongholds.[39]

After this new and decisive defeat of the anti-Bolshevik parties, there was no question that only a sanguinary civil war could reverse the events of October. Initially, the PSR wanted to play the role of a "third force" between the Bolsheviks and the white Generals Kol'chak, Denikin, and Iudenich. But the PSR was forced to come to the bitter conclusion that for this role the party needed a military force that it did not have. The advocates of the Constituent Assembly were fully at the mercy of armed bands: at first the Czechoslovak Legion, under whose protection they founded in Samara in June 1918 the "Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly" (*Komitet chlenov uchreditel'nogo sobraniia*, or *Komuch*), which they proclaimed an opposition government,[40] and later the White Army. The rump constituent assembly that assembled in Ufa (*Ufimskoe gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie*) in September 1918 found itself dependent on the White Army.[41] The right wing of the PSR joined this coalition with Kol'chak without much reservation and partici-

[36] See Radkey, Sickle, p. 203ff.; Radkey, The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Peasantry After October.

[37] See Radkey, Sickle, p. 147 and p. 427.

[38] See O.H. Radkey, The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917 (Cambridge, MA., 1950), p. 21ff.; Also, W.G. Rosenberg, "The Russian Municipal Duma Elections of 1917. A Preliminary Computation of Returns," in: SS 21 (1961), pp. 131–163.

[39] See Radkey, Sickle, p. 449ff.

[40] For the history of the PSR during the civil war see Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 318ff.; Garmiza, Krushenie eserovskikh pravitel'stv. For the policy of the social revolutionary opposition government in Samara see the very instructive: S.M. Berk, "The Democratic Counterrevolution: Komuch and the Civil War on the Volga," in: Canadian-American Slavic Studies (cited CASS) 7 No. 4 (winter 1973), pp. 443–459. For the revolt of the Czechoslovak Legion see J. Bradley, Allied Intervention in Russia (London, 1965), p. 65ff.; E. Mawdsley, Civil War; A.Kh. Klevanskii, Chekhoslovatskie Internatsionalisty i prodannyi korpus. Chekhoslovatskie politicheskie organizatsii i voinskie formirovaniia v Rossii 1914–1921 gg. (M., 1965) p. 165ff.; B. Shmeral', Chekhoslovaki i esery. (M., 1922).

[41] See Garmiza, Krushenie, p. 184ff.

pated in the "Directorate" elected by the conference in Ufa. The more left leaning faction kept its distance. It was clear to this faction that such collaboration could only veil the military dictatorship of counterrevolutionary generals and thus work to the benefit of the "liquidators of democracy."[42] Nevertheless, the left faction was compelled to associate with those forces that wanted to undo not only the Bolshevik revolt but also the February revolution. In the end, this political polarization during the Civil War led to the bloody defeat of the PSR, which culminated in the trial for treason in 1922 and resulted in death sentences for twelve leaders – notwithstanding massive international protest.[43]

To understand the role of the PSR in the Russian revolutionary movement and thereby part of the prehistory of the events of 1917, one must explain the apparent paradox in the outcome of this contest between Marxism and Populism. The paradox is this: the party of the revolutionary peasantry (and the PSR was such a party despite all its deficiencies),[44] in an overwhelmingly agrarian land suffered defeat by the Bolsheviks, a party based on a minority of the urban proletariat. The paradox is this defeat – despite all the favorable conditions, despite the deeply rooted tradition of revolutionary Russia, and despite the great support won in two revolutions – support that gave the PSR the majority of votes in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in the fall of 1917.

It might be useful to summarize the most important of the many answers that have been offered to these questions. Radkey explains the SR defeat primarily in the following terms:[45]

(1) The PSR failed to solve the two cardinal questions that determined the fate of the February regime: a peace settlement and successful land reform. Even the former supporter of the ideals of Zimmerwald and the head of the left-wing party center

[42] According to the leader of the left-center V.M. Chernov, Pered burei, p. 377; See also Chernov, Chernovskaia gramota i Ufimskaia direktoriia. Mss. Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Stanford, CA., Vw Russia C 573c; The Chernov Manifesto. Narodnoe Delo No. 178. Ufa 11/24 oktiabria 1918 g. Hoover Institution Vw Russia C 523 m.

[43] See Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 409ff.; Gusev, Partiia eserov, p. 358ff.; Protsess P.S.R. Rechi zashchitnikov: Chlenova, Subina, F. Kona, Bitsenko, Bukharina, Sadilia (M., 1922); Protsess P.S.R. Rechi gosudarstvennykh obvinitelei: Lunacharskogo, Prokrovskogo, Krylenko, predstavitelei Kominterna: K. Tsetkin, Muna, Bokani, Prilozhenie: 1. Prigovor Verkhovnogo Revoliutsionnogo Tribunala; 2. Postanovlenie Prezidiuma VTsIK. (M., 1922); Obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie po delu Tsentral'nogo Komiteta i otdel'nykh chlenov inykh organizatsii Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov po obvineniiu ikh v vooruzhennoi bor'be protiv sovetskoi vlasti, organizatsii ubiistv, vooruzhennykh ograblenii i v izmennicheskikh snosheniiakh s inostrannymi gosudarstvami (M., 1922); E. Vandervelde, Le procès des socialistes-révolutionnaires à Moscou (Brussels, 1922); Dvenadtsat' smertnikov. Sud nad sotsialistami-revoliutsionerami v Moskve (Berlin, 1922). In German: Kommunistische Blutjustiz. Der Moskauer Schauprozess der Sozialrevolutionäre und seine Opfer (Berlin, 1922).

[44] See Chapter 9 below.

[45] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 454ff.; Radkey, Sickle, p. 466ff.

V.M. Chernov approved the offensive that Prime Minister A.F. Kerenskii ordered in July 1917. Moreover, the bill for land reform that Chernov proposed as minister of agriculture in the Provisional Government failed in the face of united opposition from Kadets and internal PSR opposition.[46]

(2) The PSR suffered from a serious weakness in leadership. Chernov was a popular personality and certainly a capable theoretician with an enormous intellect, but lacked organizational talent and the ability to stay the course. Radkey's disappointment with a man who was supposed to be a hero but simply could not fulfill his role frequently breaks out in anger.

(3) Because Chernov avoided every fight, he left the field to the right wing of the party. And that right wing determined SR politics during the decisive summer months and steered the party into a fatal course ending in catastrophe. According to Radkey, the major mistake of the right-wing was that they fell under the influence of the Mensheviks and the Kadets, took over their concept of a bourgeois revolution, and developed a deep "aversion for the social revolution."[47]

(4) The PSR was a "conglomerate of dissonant elements."[48] This limited their political effectiveness and made the unsatisfactory condition of their organization even worse. The outbreak of World War I, in particular, fostered the building of factions of patriotic defenders of the fatherland and, contrariwise, international-pacifist Zimmerwald idealists. The result was a front between the right-wing, evolutionary wing and the left-wing, revolutionary wing. For Radkey, the party committed a fatal mistake when, on the eve of revolution, it did not formalize a split that, for all intents and purposes, had already practically occurred.[49]

(5) The PSR underestimated the strength of the Bolsheviks in the same measure that they exaggerated the strength of the Kadets.

(6) Despite its own self-assessment, the PSR was not a "peasant party," but rather an organization of "doctrinaire intellectuals" who could only win a superficial loyalty from the agrarian masses. It is especially this reproach of "intellectualism"[50] that runs like a thread through Radkey's history. One may assume that he saw the "intellectualism" of Russian Populism as the most important reason for its demise.

In his own history of the Russian Revolution, Chernov emphasized many of these mistakes and deficiencies to account for the failure of the PSR. Above all, he points

[46] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 212ff.; p. 245ff.; p. 318ff.; and: G. Wettig, "Die Rolle der russischen Armee im revolutionären Machtkampf 1917," in: Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte 12 (1967), pp. 46–389; I.I. Minc, Istoriia Velikogo Oktiabria. V Trekh Tomakh. vol. II (M., 1968), p. 449ff.; p. 478ff.

[47] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 467.

[48] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 455.

[49] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 457.

[50] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 20; Radkey, Sickle, p. 277, p. 481.

to the inundation of new members March 1917 – i.e., people whose contact with SR ideals was at best superficial. Chernov also noted the crisis of the party organization that, when not caused by, was certainly increased by this flood of new members. He also cited such factors as the fragmentation of the SR camp by the outbreak of World War I, the dominance of the party's right-wing, and the inadequate contact between the party leadership and the grassroots. Chernov also conceded his own failure, if not without apologetics and self-pity. As a man who tended to retire to the world of ideas, "more of a theoretician, a man of the word, of literature, the desk ... as a professional politician," he could not stand fast against the rigors of the political battle. The center of the party was a victim of the extremes. The fate of the PSR mirrors the fate of the revolution as a whole, i.e. the triumph of the centrifugal over the centripetal forces.[51]

Other autobiographical commentaries of SRs are rather less thorough in their attempt to come to terms with the past. They tend to blame the opponent, either for the irresponsibility of the Bolshevik coup d'état or for Lenin's amoral drive for power. At best, their own failures are seen in the very general conclusion that the Provisional Government could not consolidate its power.[52]

On the other side of the political spectrum, Soviet accounts argue exactly the reverse. So as to exonerate the Bolsheviks, they attempt to prove that the failure of the PSR was a necessary consequence of its basic premises and social character. They accuse the SRs of the same failures – if differently formulated – found in Radkey or Chernov, especially the lack of a solid class base, insufficient organizational discipline, and ideological heterogeneity.[53] But Soviet writers interpret these defects differently, deriving all such defects from one basic error: the PSR was condemned to defeat because of its petit-bourgeois character. According to this "argument," the SRs raised the peasantry to a revolutionary subject and assumed the interests of small property owners. This bound them to the needs of the intelligentsia, who were also counted as petit-bourgeois and who comprised the great majority of party members. As the representative of a "peasant-democratic" and "anti-feudal" movement, the neo-populist party could only be progressive during a limited transition period of Russia's revolutionary movement.[54] In the course of further development, the party had to expose ever more clearly its true anti-socialist, petit-bourgeois character. In

[51] V.M. Chernov, The Great Russian Revolution (New Haven, 1936), (new edition, New York, 1966), p. 397ff.

[52] See M.V. Vishniak, Dan' proshlomu (New York, 1954), p. 383ff.; Vishniak, Dva Puti. Fevral' i Oktiabr'. (Paris, 1931), p. 231ff.; M.V. Vishnyak, "The Role of the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1917," in: Studies on the Soviet Union. New Ser. vol.3, No. 3 (1964), pp. 172–182; Zenzinov, Iz zhizni revoliutsionera, p. 91ff.

[53] See Levanov, Iz istorii bor'by, p. 139; Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 420.

[54] Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 21; Levanov, Iz istorii bor'by, p. 142.

an objective abridgment of historical events, this interpretation presents a linear, one-way, and historically determined change of the PSR from a "left-deviationist, petit-bourgeois revolutionary attitude and revolutionary adventurism to collaboration with the bourgeois and then to open counter-revolution".[55]

Indeed, one confirm charges from each side – namely, that the institutional anchoring of the PSR in the peasantry was without a doubt questionable, that its organization was fragile, and that its theoretical-programmatic ideas remained indeed unclear. Nevertheless, these interpretations for the downfall of Neo-Populism are unsatisfactory. Both interpretations fail to address important problems and leave central questions open.

Radkey limited his analysis to events in 1917. Thus his work tries to explain the fate of the PSR by means of its deeds during the Revolution and only in a few cases does he reach back to earlier developments. His approach corresponds to a methodology that overemphasizes the role of the historical personality in particular and the subjective moment in general. Radkey failed to consider adequately the formation of the model of action and the structuring of the situation by the historical process. Instead, his history raised individual incompetence and strategic errors as the determining factors behind the catastrophe of the PSR. The history of the PSR became for him a chain of subjective mistakes that he judges from a moral perspective and with much emotion. Because he condemns more than he judges, Radkey brings criteria into his history that often spring from resentments and arbitrary sentiments. So he accuses one of his protagonists with the words: "Again we must ask, what populist theory amounts to, and again the answer is: the vaporings of intellectuals and nothing more."[56]

The approach of Soviet authors is even less satisfactory. The abridged and undifferentiated Soviet explanation of the fate of the PSR emphasizes the social character of Neo-Populism and its alleged non-socialist interests. Particularly unfortunate is the term "petit-bourgeois," which is the main support of the Soviet argument. The term petit-bourgeois is erroneous in the sense that it can hardly describe the socio-economic position of a peasantry that lived, for the most part, in traditional economic and social conditions. In addition, the term is so broad as to be unusable because it must simultaneously characterize the intelligentsia. Unusable as an analytical tool, the concept degenerates into a polemical label that only hides what should be explained in detail, namely the complex interrelationship between social-economic and political development. If one discounts Populism as non-socialist (even if willing to

[55] According to Gusev, Eritsian: Ot soglashatel'stva, p. 421.

[56] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 470. See a similar critique in the review of Radkey's first volume by: R. Pipes, in: Russian Review 18 (1959), pp. 339–340; A. Gerschenkron, in: Continuity in History and other Essays (Cambridge, MA., 1968) pp. 460–462.

give it a limited progressive function), one loses thereby the opportunity to understand the individuality of the Russian revolutionary movement and thus measures Russian conditions by a West European yardstick.

This study will attempt to fill the gap left by the above interpretations and to find an answer to the main question: why was the neo-populist movement defeated in one of the largest agricultural countries of the world? A basic assumption of this book is that the events of the revolutionary year 1917 can be adequately understood only if one understands the conditions under which the PSR had to operate. Without wanting to fall into a one-dimensional determinism, one can assume further a relevant continuity of the PSR beyond the great dividing point of the war. These assumptions direct this investigation to the beginnings of the party before 1914. They require a longer perspective to work out the trends and models of the programmatic-tactical considerations as well as the practical experience in agitation and organization of Neo-Populism. This makes it possible to test the appropriateness of Neo-Populism for the entire process of social-economic and political development of Russia since the end of the nineteenth century. With this procedure, it should be possible to avoid the widespread and obviously tautological argument that the Bolshevik victory was due to the weakness of the SRs. We hope to find more usable, better-grounded and less arbitrary measures of judgment. It is in this sense that we will try to combine party history with social history.

CHAPTER 1

The Merger of the Neo-Populists (1893–1901)

1.1. Forerunner Organizations Inside Russia

The political genealogy of the PSR is difficult to determine. The political opposition to autocracy at the beginning of the 1890s was still undifferentiated: the border between Social Democrats and Narodniki was, if not in the political theory then certainly in political action, as yet not clearly discernible. The majority of revolutionaries held themselves to be renewers of the populist tradition, even when their efforts hardly justified this claim.

When we turn to the first significant revolutionary organization of the 1890s, the "Group of Narodovol'tsy" (*Gruppa Narodovol'tsev*) founded at the end of 1891 as a reaction against economic crisis and hunger, this lack of clarity and the difference between claim and success are particularly striking. With the influential support of M.S. Aleksandrov and A.A. Fedulov, the Group of Narodovol'tsy succeeded in establishing a printing press and, in comparison to the earlier period, continued publishing activities until 1897 – an unusually long time. The early political orientation was clearly evident from their choice of the name as well as the fact that the leading populist theorist, N.K. Mikhailovskii, was asked to write the proclamation announcing the foundation of the group. However, because the very next proclamation (composed by Fedulov) so obviously reflected the Marxist tendencies of the new "naro-

dovol'tsy" it led to a break with Mikhailovskii.[1] A third proclamation demonstrated clearly the Group's change of mind, for it now openly called for some "changes in the program of the Narodnaia Volia due to the altered conditions." These changes meant that the group would no longer appeal to "old institutions" like the *obshchina* and the tradition of local self-administration. The leading SR and first historian of the party, S.N. Sletov, termed these changes the elimination "of the soul of the old 'narodnichestvo' ".[2] In March 1897, the police broke up the Group of Narodovol'tsy – shortly before it was to fuse with Lenin's organization in St. Petersburg, the "Union for the Struggle for the Liberation of the Working Class" (*Soiuz bor'by za osvobozhdenie rabochego klassa*).[3] The "Socialist-Revolutionary Party of the People's Right" (*Sotsial'no-Revoliutsionnaia Partiia Narodnogo Prava*) should be regarded as the first real predecessor of the PSR. It is above all the significant continuity of personnel that justifies this claim for this group, better known by the term "narodopravtsy." Not only were most of its initiators (such as the former leading Narodniki M.A. Natanson, N.S. Tiutchev, and A.V. Gedeonovskii) but also the majority of members (*inter alia* Chernov and his sister N.M. Chernova) later to be found at the head of the PSR. Others, such as N.F. Annenskii and A.V. Peshekhonov, were counted among the core of the *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, the journal of populist intelligentsia and the embryo of the "People's Socialist Party" (*Narodno-sotsialisticheskaia Partiia*), a spin-off from the PSR.[4] Of course some *narodopravtsy*, such as O.V. Aptekman, later became Social Democrats, itself an indication how fluid this group still was. Efforts at programmatic openness were made, the objective being to combine all "oppositional elements" of the country in a united front for the "liberation from the yoke of autocracy" behind the general demand to convene a Constituent Assembly.[5] Unfortunately, before the *narodopravtsy* could take even the first steps in realizing their program, they were arrested in February 1894.

In the mid-1890s, formation of the neo-populist movement entered a new stage, as the theoretical conflicts between Social Democrats and Populists even intruded into less significant circles, producing a polarization at these lower echelons as well. This change was reflected in the names of the new groups: more and more non-

[1] See M.S. Aleksandrov, Gruppa narodovol'tsev (1891–1894 gg.), in: Byloe. Istoriko-revoliutsionnyi sbornik 1906, No. 11, pp. 1–27, here p. 18; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 30ff.; Sletov, Ocherki p. 29ff.

[2] Sletov, Ocherki, p. 31, in agreement with S. Grigorovich [Kh. O. Zhitlovskii], Sotsializm i bor'ba za politicheskuiu svobodu. (London, 1896), pp. 50–51.

[3] See Sletov, Ocherki, p. 33.

[4] See the membership list by V.V. Shirokova, Partiia narodnogo prava. Iz istorii osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia 90-kh godov XIX veka. (Saratov, 1972), p. 182ff.; In general see further: Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R, p. 34ff.; Sletov, Ocherki, p. 29; O.V. Aptekman, Partiia Narodnogo Prava. Vospominaniia, in: Byloe, July 1907, pp. 177–204; Partiia narodnogo prava, Nasushchnyi vopros (London, 1895).

[5] See excerpts from the Manifesto of the "Narodnoe Pravo"-Group by Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 35ff.; also Shirokova, p. 65ff.

social-democratic groups called themselves "socialist-revolutionaries." The successors of Narodnaia Volia thus became the predecessors to the PSR. In addition, parallel to this programmatic differentiation, the number of neo-populist followers increased by leaps and bounds. Of extraordinary significance was the fact that the prominent Narodniki of the 1870s convicted in the famous "Trial of the 193" in 1878, had served out their sentences and could now return from Siberian banishment. Most of these returnees had preserved the political convictions of their youth and began immediately to participate actively in the revolutionary movement. The young populist generation gathered around the likes of E.E. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, P.I. Voinaral'skii, P.F. Nikolaev, and V.A. Balmashev – to name only a few of the prominent figures.[6] The experience, reputation, contacts, and connections of the older leaders were of immeasurable help in the founding of new groups and circles.

As a result, by the end of the 1890s the neo-populist movement had at its disposal a respectable number of bases in European Russia. An SR circle in Kiev, founded in 1896, was of particular importance. According to a police report, this circle was not satisfied with the "economic" agitation of the Social Democratic "Union for the Battle for the Liberation of the Working Class."[7] Led by the surveyor I.A. D'iakov, the membership of this circle was, aside from three workers, recruited from the intelligentsia. The group concentrated its activities exclusively on the workers, especially the railway workers, and it enjoyed some success. It established circles of instruction, set up a printing press, and disseminated proclamations (at the time, by no means something common),[8] and maintained contact with like-minded friends in Odessa, Kursk, St. Petersburg, Poltava, Voronezh, and Saratov. The Okhrana arrested the D'iakov circle in 1898.

At the same time, SR circles in other cities had similar success. That was the case, for example, in Nizhnii-Novgorod (where the circle was led by A.V. Panov, one of the founders of the PSR), Penza (where the leading role was played by P.P. Kraft, one of the most active socialist -revolutionary underground workers), Odessa (where the "Old Narodnik" N.I. Ivanov-Okhlonin[9] collected a circle

[6] Nikolaev recruited D.V. Brilliant, who later became a famous terrorist; V.A. Balmashev was the father of S.V. Balmashev, who in the name of the socialist revolutionary fighting organization, murdered the Minister of the Interior D.S. Sipiagin. See Sletov, K istorii vozniknoveniia, p. 42.

[7] See Iz proshlogo Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, in: Byloe 1908, No. 8, pp. 22–34, here p. 26ff.

[8] It is worth mentioning in this context that the first proclamation in Russia for May Day was published in 1896.

[9] For Ivanov-Okhlonin see The Archive of the PSR "Narodnicheskoe dvizhenie" in the International Institute for Social History Amsterdam (cited, Archive PSR), in File No. 560. The Archive is only roughly ordered and the separate files contain as a rule numerous different documents which are largely not even paginated. It is therefore necessary to cite the important documents with the complete title; for the less important documents the file number will be sufficient.

of youthful sympathizers), as well as Voronezh, Tambov, Saratov, Chernigov, and Perm'.[10]

Socialist-Revolutionary circles spread so rapidly over large parts of European Russia that they began to coalesce into larger organizations and to draft programs seeking to unify theory and tactics. The neo-populist movement had reached the stage of party construction. Towards the end of the 1890s, three such regional organizations had taken shape in Russia. And it was from a fusion of these organizations that the PSR would be created.

The Northern Alliance

The roots of the earliest and most important regional organization are to be found in a group that came together in Saratov soon after the collapse of the *narodopravtsy*. Led by A.A. Argunov, in 1896 this group assumed the name "Alliance of Socialist-Revolutionaries" (*Soiuz Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*). Later it would be known as the "Northern Alliance of Socialist-Revolutionaries" (*Severnyi Soiuz Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*).

Argunov was an indispensable organizer and would later be among the leading members of the Central Committee of the PSR. The first attempt to present the programmatic foundation of the SR movement was the brochure "Our Tasks" (*Nashi zadachi*), written in 1898 by Argunov.[11] This platform was unsatisfactory, however: it was simply plagiarized from the program of Narodnaia Volia and, as even Argunov admitted, was "in all essential points" related to the Narodnaia Volia program. Thus, Argunovs' brochure was limited mainly to the glorification of political terror, which was held to be the only effective means for the revolutionary struggle. "Our Tasks" argued that, so long as the opposition remained weaker than the state, the opposition should not refrain from attacks against senior tsarist officials and even the Tsar himself, on the grounds that "*autocracy and terror* are *two logically connected phenomena.*"[12] Terror as a weapon was to be supported by propaganda among the urban workers, the intelligentsia, and the bourgeoisie.[13] Although the Northern Alliance saw the agrarian population as the real support of the desired revolution, the countryside was not, for the moment at least, regarded as a partner in the struggle: "In view of the existence of the autocracy with its system that prevents the people from

[10] See Sletov, Ocherki, pp. 36,43ff. who furthermore mentions socialist revolutionary groups in: Moscow, Khar'kov, Ekaterinoslav, Poltava, Tambov, Vladimir und Viatka.

[11] For the Northern Alliance see A. [A.] Argunov, Iz proshlogo partii sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, in: Byloe 1907, October, pp. 95–112; Sletov, K istorii vozniknoveniia, p. 61ff.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 50ff. – [A.A. Argunov], Nashi zadachi. Osnovnye polozheniia programmy Soiuza Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. Izd. 2-oe. S. posleslovicm S. Grigorovicha [Ch. O. Zhitlovskii], Sotsialdemokraty i Sotsialisty-Revoliutsionery. Izd. Soiuza Russkikh Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (London, 1900).

[12] Nashi zadachi, p. 47 (emphasis in original).

[13] Nashi zadachi, p. 57.

thinking on its own, and in view of the oppression of the masses, the poverty, the ignorance, and the enormous dispersion of the masses throughout the vast territory of Russia," agitation in the villages was therefore a task for the future.[14] But, even without the peasants, Argunov saw prospects for the new revolutionary movement to achieve victory. Encouraged by the "increasing unrest" of the workers, Argunov believed that his hope was justified, that the workers and the intelligentsia alone would be capable of defeating the autocracy. This victory would be possible, however, only if the workers and the intelligentsia took the tactical teachings of Narodnaia Volia to heart. Argunov summarized his teaching: "Terrorism in close connection with the mass struggle of the working class will be the objective of development".[15]

The ideas of the Northern Alliance were discussed in SR circles in Tambov, Voronezh, St. Petersburg, and Kiev but failed to achieve the intended unifying effect. Above all, the neo-Populists of South Russia made quite clear their reservations about the glorification of terrorist tactics.[16] Criticism came as well from the Narodniki living in exile. For example, Chernov mocked: "The draft [of "Our Goals"] belongs to a *narodovolets* from the period of decay, when a *narodopravets* and a Social Democrat sit on both sides and pull him first to the right and then to the left."[17] The most pointed objection was formulated by Sletov, who later complained that "Our Goals" copied the program of Narodnaia Volia but did not accept the essential prerequisite of this program – namely, belief in the possibility for the immediate realization of revolt. If one denied this possibility, then the maximal-terrorist tactic lost its legitimacy, thereby making it necessary to prepare a minimal program for the transition period.[18] Argunov certainly offered his critics many reasons for critique: he thoughtlessly equated the political conditions of his time with the conditions under which the Narodnaia Volia was active and thereby saddled the new movement with a burden that was anything but helpful.[19]

In 1897 the Saratov Group moved its activities to Moscow and began preparing for the publication of a party paper. Although such a paper already existed in the form of "The Russian Worker" (*Russkii rabochii*), published and edited in exile by Ch.O. Zhitlovskii, this paper did not reach its Russian public often and its quality was not considered to be very good. Therefore, there was the need in Russia for a good paper to serve as the voice of the new populist movement.[20] From Mikhailovskii's

[14] Nashi zadachi, p. 45.

[15] Nashi zadachi, p. 36 and p. 50.

[16] See Sletov, Iz istorii, p. 73; Argunov, Iz proshlogo, p. 105.

[17] Chernov, Pered burei, p. 98.

[18] See Sletov, K istorii, p. 71.

[19] See Nashi zadachi, p. 50.

[20] See Russkii Rabochii. Ezhemesiachnoe izdanie Soiuza russkikh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. (Paris, later London, 1894–1899). Argunov, Iz proshlogo, p. 109.

Russkoe bogatstvo circle, Argunov elicited the services of the best-known populist journalists – A.V. Peshekhonov and V.A. Miakotin. Even the Social Democratic "Bund" agreed to supply technical assistance. The first number of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* ("Revolutionary Russia") appeared in January 1901. This was justly celebrated as a great success in the annals of the socialist revolutionary movement.[21]

Unfortunately, the expectations of many readers were not satisfied by the new paper and the first issues were found to be rather weak and colorless. These impressions were caused primarily by the efforts of the editors to speak to a wide opposition audience. Thus the calls in the name of "varied interests" – the "factory workers, the millions of peasants, the educated strata of the intelligentsia, the enslaved peoples of Finland, Poland and others" – for the struggle for political freedom and against autocracy were so broad that they could not be identified with any particular party. In order not to disqualify *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* as a possible point for unifying the many populist currents, this paper was – in contrast to Argunov in "Our Goals" – careful and reserved. Nevertheless, this policy did have some success. The highly regarded "On the Eve" (*Nakanune*), a paper published by a group of Narodniki in exile in London, found that *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* contained nothing that the authors of the "Manifesto of the Socialist Revolutionary Party" (i.e. the SR circles in south Russia) could not also sign.[22]

For security reasons the Northern Alliance was compelled in the fall of 1901 to move its printing press to the Siberian city of Tomsk. During the printing of the third issue of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* the Siberian hideout was raided by the tsarist political police, the Okhrana; the hideout was betrayed by an Okhrana informer, E.F. Azef, who had been recommended to Argunov's circle by exile revolutionaries.[23] None of those present, including Argunov, the writer E.E. Kolosov, and the later terrorist P.A. Kulikovskii, was able to escape. Further arrests sealed the fate of the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance had a total of some thirty members and

[21] For legal populism see A. P. Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia. Legal Marxism and Legal Populism (Cambridge, MA., 1961) and below p. 133ff. For the "*Bund*": E. Mendelsohn, Class Struggle in the Pale. The Formative Years of the Jewish Worker's Movement in Tsarist Russia (Cambridge, 1970); H.J. Tobias, The Jewish Bund in Russia. From its Origins to 1905 (Stanford, 1972).

[22] See Sletov, K istorii, p. 74. – Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia. Izd. Soiuza Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (cited RR), No. 1 (1900), p. 1. – Nakanune. Sotsial'no-revoliutsionnoe obozrenie. London, No. 28 (April 1901), p. 34.

[23] After the murder of Alexander II, a special section (osobyi otdel) of the police was founded in 1881 for the prosecution of political crimes. In 1902–03, the Police Chief of Moscow S.V. Zubatov established regional agencies, the "okhrannye otdeleniia" (Protection Departments). The name of the entire political police is derived from these "Protection Departments". See S.M. LaPorte, Histoire de l'Okhrana, La police secrète des tsars, 1880–1917 (Paris, 1935); R.J. Johnson, Zagranichnaia Agentura: "The Tsarist Political Police in Europe," in: Journal of Contemporary History 7 (1971), p. 221–242; A.T. Vasiliev, The Okhrana. The Russian Secret Police (Philadelphia, 1930); E.E. Smith, "The Okhrana". The Russian Department of Police. A Bibliography (Stanford, 1967).

maintained bases not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg but also in Iaroslavl'. Only two activists remained at large: M.F. Seliuk (soon to be among the leaders of the PSR) and Azef – whose freedom was probably not an accident.[24]

The Southern Groups

In August 1897 a conference was held in Voronezh with the aim of organizing the merger of SR groups in south Russia, the Ukraine, and elsewhere. Representatives from Kiev, St. Petersburg, and Khar'kov tried to work out a common program as a basis for the merger. Especially controversial were the questions concerning the tactic of terror and whether the peasantry was ready for socialist revolutionary agitation. Notwithstanding differences, it proved possible to establish a consensus about a fundamental understanding of the Russian village, as Sletov remarked with satisfaction, only one delegate from Poltava tended toward a Social-Democratic heresy. Despite differences of opinion, the conference decided to found the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, a name already current for the union of the groups in Voronezh. The leading personality of the host committee, A.O. Sytsianko, was given the task of reworking the draft program. Sytsianko was a respected former *narodovolets*; his early death in 1897 robbed the PSR of a politician of great promise. This program was, aside from some small changes, approved by a second unification conference convened in Poltava in November 1897. But, even as the program was being printed, the Okhrana moved in and arrested Sytsianko. A short time later the central groups of the alliance in Kiev and St. Petersburg fell victim to the Okhrana as well, thereby disrupting negotiations for fusion. A second attempt at fusion was made at a conference in Kiev in August 1898 but nothing came of these efforts. The student unrest that unsettled Russian society since 1899 benefited the fusion efforts of the Social-Revolutionaries and led finally to success. A further conference accepted the draft program of SRs from Voronezh. That draft was published in November 1900 as the "Manifesto of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party."[25]

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[24] See, aside from Argunov, Iz proshlogo: Obzor vazhneishikh doznanii proizvodivshikhsia v zhandarmskikh upravleniiakh za 1901 god. (Rostov-na-Donu, 1902) pp. 39–41.

[25] In general see Sletov, Ocherki, p. 69; Sletov, K istorii, p. 67ff.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 70ff. Sytsianko's Program, that Sletov (Ocherki, p. 72) thought was lost, was found in the 1920s among the documents of the Okhrana from Voronezh and subsequently published. Sytsianko's programs anticipated the positions of the "Manifesto" in all essential points, above all in the question of terror and the agitation of the peasants. See N. Sergeevskii, Propavshaia gramota P.S.-R.-ov (Programma Poltavskogo s"ezda P.S.-R. 1897 g.), in: Istoriko-revoliutsionnyi sbornik. Pod red. V.I. Nevskogo. T.I. (Leningrad, 1924), pp. 105–111, pp. 125–126; T. III (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 287–295. – Manifest Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, in: Nakanune. London No. 25 (January 1901), pp. 302–304. Published in: G.A. Kuklin, Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii za sorok let. 1862–1902. (Geneva, 1903). Dobavlenie, pp. 122–129. For the unrest in the tsarist Universities see P.S. Gusiatnikov, Revoliutsionnoe studencheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii 1899–1907 gg. (Moscow, 1971); G. Kiss, Die gesellschaftspolitische Rolle der Studentenbewegung im vorrevolutionären Rußland (Munich, 1963).

This second program of the neo-populist movement perceived the tasks of the new party in regard to the workers in the same way as "Our Goals." More strongly than Argunov, however, the party demanded that agitation among the industrial proletariat be given priority – both because it represented the "most enlightened" stratum and because it was "most receptive for revolutionary and socialist influence." The Manifesto offered the hypothesis that propaganda must be aimed at "educational effect" for its own sake and the economic needs of the workers. In accord with the SD model, the program suggested that the struggle should be directed at improving the material condition of workers. Although the authors of the program hastened to reaffirm their conviction that under current conditions the demands of the unions could achieve partial success at best, these statements of socialist revolutionary principle could not lessen the skepticism of committed Populists toward such heretical Marxist opinions. For example, Sletov found that the Manifesto section on the proletariat did not offer "anything new in comparison to the average, contemporary Social-Democratic opinion."[26]

The characterization of the role of the intelligentsia in society and in the revolutionary movement by the program of the Southern Groups was similar to that found in "Our Goals." Both drew upon earlier conceptions of the populist tradition. This similarity can be seen in that both the Southern Groups and "Our Goals" perceived the so called country intelligentsia – i.e., teachers, doctors, zemstvo statisticians, lawyers and related professions in the provinces – as an ideal mediator between the revolutionary avantgarde and the "dark people" and therefore endowed with a special function in "awakening" the peasantry. In addition, in the lower urban "middle class" they discerned a "proletarian intelligentsia" that, like the real proletariat, lived from the sale of its labor and hence occupied a position between the bourgeoisie and the workers. Thereby dangling between the workers and bourgeoisie, the proletarian intelligentsia provided an ideal reservoir for the Socialist-Revolutionary elite.[27]

With regard to the peasantry, however, the SRs of southern Russia held views that differed significantly from those of Argunov. Their statements may have been carefully phrased, but the substance of their position was clear. The Manifesto argued for immediate agitation among the agrarian population. Because the interdependence between the city and country was increasing in the course of economic development and because the contacts between the urban and agrarian population were growing as a result of the flight from the village, these processes created a stratum in the peasantry that was purportedly no less interested than the industrial proletariat in achieving "the abolition of the existing political and economic order."[28]

[26] Manifesto, p. 302. -Sletov, K istorii, p. 83; Sletov, Ocherki, p. 75.
[27] Manifesto, p. 304.
[28] Manifesto, p. 303.

For the authors of the "Manifesto," this stratum was important: it contained not only the landless (here they agreed with the Social Democrats) but also the land-hungry peasants. Thus they declared that the peasants were a revolutionary force. It was especially this point that most clearly revealed the populist tradition of the Manifesto and that would show the way to the future. This understanding of the peasantry became the center of the SR theory of class and revolution.

The most obvious difference between "Our Goals" and the deliberations of the Southern Groups concerned the question of terror. "Our Goals" held terror to be a kind of political divining rod, whereas the "Manifesto" made no mention of this at all. According to Sletov, this left a "curious impression" on the participants. The claim that this missing reference to terror was really the fault of the printer (according to the later account by Sletov) appears improbable: the tactic of terror contradicted the entire general line of the Manifesto, which advocated mass agitation among unions.[29]

Such contradictions were expressed in the pointed rejection with which the Northern Alliance reacted to the appearance of this competing program from the south. It accused the authors of the southern program of "Social Democratism" and suspended any thoughts of cooperation. Other SR circles were "rather reserved." That was especially true of an important group in Saratov, which had gathered around L.P. Bulanov and the later agrarian expert of the party N.I. Rakitnikov. Social Democrats reacted, in general, with applause and *Iskra* (The Spark) invited the authors of the Manifesto to become members of the RSDRP. Despite all these contradictions, Sletov later concluded that the appearance of this program represented a "great step forward," because – in contrast to Argunov's brochure – it grew out of the common efforts of several organizations. More importantly, this program finally transcended the limitations of the Narodnaia Volia in a constructive way.[30]

The Workers Party for the Political Emancipation of Russia

A third PSR forerunner had its roots in a workers' education circle in Minsk, successfully led since 1895 by S.F. Kovalik, a well known "narodnik" of the 1870s, A.O. Bonch-Osmolovskii, and especially E. Gal'perin, both of whom were former *narodovol'tsy*. This circle called itself the "Workers' Party for the Political Emancipation of Russia" (*Rabochaia partiia politicheskogo osvobozhdeniia Rossii*, or *RPPOR*). In 1899 this circle had about sixty members, among them two architects of the PSR, E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia and G.A. Gershuni. Compared to the other socialist revolutionary groups, the RPPOR was a special case because it concentrated its agitation on Jewish workers. Accordingly, its main base of action was primarily in

[29] See Sletov, Ocherki, p. 77; Sletov, K istorii, p. 85.

[30] See Argunov, Iz proshlogo, p. 105. – Sletov, Ocherki, p. 85 and p. 79.

strongly Jewish Belorussia, but it also concentrated on Belostok, Ekaterinoslav, Zhitomir, Dvinsk, Berdichev and St. Petersburg. This area was in fact made accessible to the PSR by the RPPOR.[31]

Like the other groups, the RPPOR presented its ideas in a programmatic statement. This statement was composed by L. Rodionova-Kliachko and Gershuni and appeared in 1900 under the title, "About Freedom" (*O svobode*). In contrast to the Manifesto, this brochure declared autocracy, not capitalism and the industrialists, to be the "first and main enemy." It emphasized that "it is time for us to understand, that behind the masters of the factories there stands another, larger power, the power of the Russian autocratic government". To make the way free for a democratic social order, one must first "eliminate the representatives of power who are directly interested in maintaining the existing despotic order".[32] Consequently, Kliachko-Rodionova and Gershuni recommended political terror as the most effective weapon in the revolutionary struggle. Their tactical and programmatic ideas were just as fully bound to the model of Narodnaia Volia as were the ideas of the Northern Alliance.

Although this particular strategy and the ideas of revolutionary populism in general were already very closely related to anarchist thought, the differences between the RPPOR and the anarchists were even further reduced by the organizational concept of extreme decentralization. The party was only a "federation of autonomous local groups" and their independence was not to be limited by any central authority.[33] It should come as no surprise, then, to find that the cities in which the RPPOR before 1901 were strongly represented were centers of the Maximalism and anarchist movement.

Despite the fact that the brochure "About Freedom" supported the essential propositions of "Our Goals," it generated much enthusiasm in *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*. The critique of the superficiality of the social analysis was indeed partly justified. The personnel and theoretical borrowing from the program of the Narodnaia Volia was also cause for complaint. Compared to the Manifesto, the considerations and recommendations of the RPPOR were thus without question a step backwards.[34]

1.2. Realignments Among Exile Populists

Membership in the PSR was by no means limited to SR organizations inside Russia. The party became a comprehensive populist party because it was able to motivate

[31] See Sletov, Ocherki, p. 87ff.; Chernov, Pered burei, p. 139f.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 58ff.

[32] Iz proklamatsii "Rabochei Partii Politicheskogo Osvobozhdeniia Rossii" (1900 g.), in: G.A. Kuklin, Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia. Dobavlenie, p. 121. – Excerpts in Spiridovich, Partiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, p. 59f.

[33] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 60.

[34] See Sletov, Ocherki, p. 90.

many foreign groups to join in the common struggle. These numerous groups were founded in the capitals of Western Europe by the large colony of exiled former Narodniki, especially in Paris, London, Bern, and Geneva. Indeed, the largest part of the elite of revolutionary populism lived in exile. The populist reservoir of intellectual and political potential was abroad and, without these resources, the founding of a party in Russia could only be partially successful.

Several prominent veterans of narodnichestvo – namely, N.V. Chaikovskii, S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii, F.V. Volkhovskii, L.E. Shishko, V.L. Burtsev, and E.E. Lazarev – had as early as 1890 come together in London. These activists edited a newspaper, *Svobodnaia Rossiia* ("Free Russia"), and founded in 1891 the *Fond vol'noi russkoi pressy* (Fund of the Free Russian Press) with the intention of providing brochures and material for revolutionary agitation in Russia.

A few years later, in Bern, the revolutionary and philosopher Zhitlovskii founded the "Union of Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries" (*Soiuz russkikh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov*). This organization published the paper *Russkii rabochii*, which was later so reviled by Argunov. Zhitlovskii, the last of the successors to the Narodnaia Volia, was called the "accepted leader of the new socialist revolutionary direction." His circle became an important center of the populist emigration. Chernov, who left Russia in 1899, regarded it as a stroke of fate that his first attempts at making contacts in exile led him to this group. At the same time however, he found fault with the overestimation and sense of irreality of Zhitlovskii's circle because of the way in which it demanded the right to leadership over all those who were considered "socialist-revolutionary." The founding of the PSR in Russia without the direct participation of the exiles in Bern meant for them "practically a slap in the face."[35]

The "Group of Old Narodovol'tsy" (*Gruppa starykh narodovol'tsev*) came together in Paris in 1893. This group was lead by the best known representative of populist philosophy in exile, P.A. Lavrov. Due to the group's strong personality, which "itself truly represented a Mecca for the exiles," it soon became the largest organization of populist exiles. That Paris already had a very large colony of Russian exiles certainly made it easier to find new members.

A further center for exiles was the editors of *Nakanune*, a journal published in London since 1899 by E.A. Serebriakov.[36]

[35] See in general: Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 42ff.; Chernov, Pered burei, p. 107ff. For the group in London: S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii v Londonskoi emigratsii (Moscow, 1968); E. Taratuta, S.M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii: Revoliutsioner i pisatel' (Moscow, 1973); D. Senese, "S.M. Kravchinskii and the National Front Against Autocracy". in : SR 34 (1975), p. 506–522; E.E. Lazarev, Moia zhizn'. Vospominaniia, stat'i, pis'ma, materialy. (Prague, 1935); V.L. Burtsev, Bor'ba za svobodnuiu Rossiiu. Moi vospominaniia (1822–1922 g.g.) (Berlin, 1923); for Shishko: Pamiati Leonida Emmanuelovicha Shishko (Paris. Izd. Ts.K. P.S.-R. 1910). Citations: Chernov, Pered burei, p. 110 and p. 111.

[36] Chernov, Pered burei, p. 117; Citation p. 118.

However, all these groups were either unable or unwilling to cooperate. They were, to a large degree, cut off from each other because they preferred to work alone. Lavrov's secretary, S.A. Rappoport ("An-skii"), strongly criticized this state of affairs; it was, thanks to his efforts, that around the turn of the century an attempt was made to consolidate the many exile groups.

The funeral ceremonies for Lavrov in Paris in February 1900 offered a good opportunity to close ranks, for the entire populist leadership in western Europe was finally assembled in one place at the same time. The decision was made, literally at Lavrov's grave, to found an organization for the production of agitation literature that was to be directed at the Russian peasantry. This organization was called the "Agrarian-Socialist League" (*Agrarno-sotsialisticheskaia Liga*, or ASL). The ASL soon became the most significant exile group because almost all the significant populist "stariki" (patriarchs) became members, including Volkhovskii, Chaikovskii, I.A. Rubanovich, Lazarev, Zhitlovskii, Shishko, D.A. Khilkov, D.A. Klements, S.M. Kliachko, Rappoport and Serebriakov. For the first time the representatives of a younger populist generation, the future leaders of the PSR such as Chernov, M.R. Gots and Sletov, played a visible role next to these older leaders. By unifying in this way old Narodniki and young SRs, the ASL initiated the cooperation that became the essence and the beginning of the PSR.[37]

According to the ASL statute, its purpose was the "publication and dissemination of literature that is not only appropriate for the peasantry but also for urban workers and craftsmen; this literature should have as well a special relationship with the village." In addition, the socialist literature of western Europe was to be edited in order to make the Russian revolutionary scene acquainted with the discussions of the Second International. The catalogue of minimal conditions for membership in the ASL included the conviction that "the working mass of the Russian peasantry" is capable of actively participating in the revolutionary struggle. Although this was a rather open statement, the connection with the populist tradition could not be missed. At the same time, there were reservations against officially fixing these party preferences. Many "stariki," Volkhovskii, and Shishko protested most vehemently and warned of the danger of erecting impossible barriers to the realization of the old dream of a unified, empire-wide party of revolutionaries. As evidence of such "non-partiality" of the ASL, Volkhovskii even considered offering the membership to the Social Democrat D. Soskis. This example had no consequences, however, and hence

[37] For Rappoport see Chernov, Pered burei, p. 111ff., here: p. 118; Chernov Semen Akimovich [Rappoport] v riadakh P.S.-R., B.I. Nicolaevsky Collection (cited NC), Hoover Institution, No. 232 No. 26. For the ASL: Chernov, pered burei, p. 124ff; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 855ff.; Pervyi s"ezd Agr.-Sots. Ligi 20 July 1902, Archive PSR 451; Membership list of the ASL, Archive PSR 298; and numerous further documents in Archive PSR 451, 298 and 306.

the separation between the ASL and PSR did not seem credible. K. Zetkin's ironic play on words directed at Chernov showed all too clearly that the close solidarity between the two organizations was no secret in international socialism: "And how is your Agrarian Socialist Lie?"[38]

The programmatic positions of the ASL were presented in the brochure "The Next Question Concerning the Revolutionary Cause" (*Ocherednoi vopros revoliutsionnogo dela*), which was written by Chernov and published in 1900. While the political analysis and tactical formulae of the Northern Alliance and the RPPOR were mere copies of the program of Narodnaia Volia and whereas the authors of the Manifesto borrowed much from Social Democratic theory, Chernov reached back to the tradition of the earliest populist movement – Zemlia i Volia. He renewed the democratic content of the original "narodnichestvo" (in the sense of the first of the two meanings as reconstructed by R. Pipes) and he accentuated the idea that the revolution must be borne by the agrarian masses. Revolutionary theory should no longer be primarily concerned with replacing the masses with a conscious avant-garde, but rather should return to the basic questions of the conditions and possibilities of revolutionizing the majority of the population – viz., the peasantry. Chernov summarized the intentions of the young Populists thus: "We dreamt of a return to Zheliabov's version of the general route to revolution," thereby rejecting the elitism as represented by the chief theoretician of Narodnaia Volia, L.A. Tikhomirov.[39]

In accord with these objectives, Chernov first noted a number of aspects of the socio-economic development that, in his opinion, promoted unrest and turmoil in the agrarian sector and thereby increased the receptiveness of the agrarian population to revolutionary ideas. These aspects were, among others, the increasing oppression of the peasantry, the creation of ideological mediators in the form of the intelligentsia in the countryside, and the "general impetus and growth of the self-consciousness of the people." Chernov hoped that industrialization would close the divide between the city and the countryside, a divide that led to the failure of the revolutionaries in the 1870s, and make it possible to "expand the area of revolutionary influence to the village without the necessity of a new 'Movement to the People.'" From spontaneous revolts one could, on the basis of these changes, move to "a more conscious and systematic struggle."[40] Chernov did not accept the objections that the peasantry was split and therefore incapable of being organized. He responded by pointing out that the factory hierarchy split the working class in the same measure as territorial

[38] Chernov, Semen Akimovich v riadakh P.S.-R., NC No. 232 No. 26.

[39] [V.M. Chernov], Ocherednoi vopros revoliutsionnogo dela. Izd. Agrarno-sotsialisticheskoi Ligi. (London, 1900; 2nd expanded and revised edition, Geneva, 1902). – Chernov, Pered burei, p. 106; R. Pipes, Narodnichestvo.

[40] Ocherednoi vopros, 1st edition, p. 23, p. 24, p. 23.

dispersion split the peasantry. Chernov thus regarded the homogeneity of the proletariat as a myth.[41] A more serious difficulty was the conservative attitude of the peasantry. Even those peasants who emigrated to the cities maintained their traditionalism. This was especially evident from the fact that peasants in the cities were very often strike breakers. But even here Chernov did not see any objectively permanent barrier: he saw the problem not in the deep conservatism of the peasants, but in the mistakes committed during agitation. He argued that peasant workers represented "a completely different socio-psychological type" from established urban workers. He also contended that the great mass of peasants were as exploited as the workers and hence were just as interested in changing the current state of affairs.[42] Chernov's argument concerning the peasantry stated, just like the Manifesto, an axiom of the populist theory of revolution and led him to his primary interest: the determination to prove the worth of the peasantry as a revolutionary agent and to resist its disqualification at the hands of orthodox Marxist theory. Although this argument was not intended to initiate an immediate change of tactics, it did in fact move the agitation of the Socialist Revolutionaries in a new direction. The peasantry should no longer be neglected because Russia's future was to be found not only in the city but also in the village".[43]

Like the Manifesto, ASL's program did not mention political terror. This was not surprising, considering the fact that Chernov drew upon the tradition of narodnichestvo, not Narodnaia Volia. As we will see, it was precisely the stariki of the ASL who where the most fervent proponents of terror. If Chernov's brochure led to the opposite impression, this was due to its exclusively theoretical intention.

We can assume that Chernov's optimistic assessment of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry in general and the Russian peasantry in particular was based on the practical experience that he accumulated in Tambov province during the years 1898–1899. The same is true for his student and aide Sletov. Sletov, however, came to much more radical conclusions. He maintained that "a sufficient foundation in the peasantry for the activity of a Socialist Revolutionary" was already at hand. Sletov argued, above all, against a widely disseminated Social Democratic thesis when he maintained that land hunger repressed "internal peasant quarrels" – even in those areas where the peasantry was socially and economically differentiated. Confronted with an external enemy, the village often acts "with an astounding solidarity and

[41] Ocherednoi vopros, p. 37f.

[42] See Ocherednoi vopros, p. 51 and p. 9f. – For the "peasant worker", who played an important role in the social structure of the PSR, see Th. v. Laue, "Russian Labor Between Field and Factory", in: California Slavic Studies 3 (1964), pp. 33–65; v. Laue "Russian Peasants in the Factory, 1892–1904", in: JEH 21 (1961), pp. 61–80; R.E. Zelnik, "The Peasant and the Factory", in: Vucinich, Peasant in the Nineteenth Century Russia, p. 158–190.

[43] Ocherednoi vopros, p. 72 and p. 35.

organization ... as one man." Sletov argued that "a more constant struggle of the peasantry rages in the countryside against the private landowners as against the class of exploiters," and predicted that a "spontaneous revolt" can be expected soon. Sletov's prognosis concerning the expected peasant revolt became reality in the spring of 1902 – in Khar'kov and Poltava provinces. His article was the only programmatic document from the founding period of the PSR which, on the basis of all these observations, declared agitation of the peasantry to be the primary task of Socialist Revolutionary activity.[44]

In the same year that ASL was founded, N.S. Rusanov and Rubanovich, both veterans of Narodnaia Volia, established a further neo-populist organization with their paper *Vestnik russkoi revoliutsii* ("Messenger of the Russian Revolution," *VRR*). Their program was close to that of the Northern Alliance. Both Rusanov and Rubanovich were extremely skeptical of agitation among the peasantry; that idea was regarded by the majority of exiled intellectuals as a suspiciously Social Democratic idea. Although several well known revolutionaries (such as Rappoport and M. Gots) were editors of *VRR*, it could not become a magnet for populist exiles in the manner of the ASL. Indeed, Rappoport felt obliged to protest against the affiliation of this group with the PSR.[45]

This overview of the numerous, differing currents in the SR movement before the founding of the PSR may appear confusing. The picture becomes clearer if one orders the various groups in accord with their position on the two basic questions of populist politics: (1) whether they were skeptical about the possibility of agitation of the peasantry, a question posed during the period of decay of Narodnaia Volia in the early 1880s and supported by Marxist theory; and, (2) whether they held terror to be an appropriate tactic in the changed social and political situation. Each of the four possible combinations of positions were represented. With regard to the first question, the dividing line was drawn between the pro-peasant ASL and the authors of the Manifesto, on the one hand, and the Northern Alliance and the editors of *VRR*, on the other. The Manifesto could be seen as performing a mediating role, insofar as it set a high priority on agitation among the peasants. The situation was different regarding the second question. Here ASL and the Northern Alliance stood on the same pro-terrorist side, while the anti-terrorist opposition prevailed among the SRs of south Russia, the authors of the Manifesto, and Sletov. Because a positive attitude to terror implied serious organizational consequences, one can identify,

[44] See V.M. Chernov, Zapiski sotsialista-revoliutsionera (Berlin, 1922), p. 311ff. – S. Nechetnyi [S.N. Sletov], U zemli (Zametki i vospominaniia), in: Vestnik Russkoi Revoliutsii. Sotsial'no-politicheskoe obozrenie (cited: VRR). Pod red. K. Tarasova [N.S. Rusanov] Geneva, Paris No. 2 (February 1902) otdel II pp. 37–82. Citations, p. 78, pp. 39–40, p. 46.

[45] See Chernov, Pered burei, p. 147f., p. 160.

roughly speaking, two alternative models from which the newly founded party had to choose: (1) a terrorist-conspirative and consequently elitist model; and, (2) a model that tended to be more democratic, more open, and more oriented toward the masses – i.e., either the urban or agrarian lower-class masses. Although one can not deny that a non-conspirative party was hardly realistic in the face of persecution from the autocracy, nevertheless the inner party critique was justified when it recognized the necessary separation of a consciously elitist organizational form from a democratic, conspirative-elitist form in early PSR leadership.[46]

1.3. The Founding of the PSR and the Programmatic Consensus

Five years after the first efforts at building regional organizations in Russia, the process leading to the unification of all Socialist Revolutionary groups in Russia and in exile finally moved into a decisive phase in the winter of 1901–1902. The serious obstacles to fusion were only overcome by the tireless energy of a few outstanding personalities, namely Gershuni and Breshko-Breshkovskaia in Russia and the exiles Chernov and Gots.

G.A. Gershuni, the son of a peasant from Kovno province, was born in 1870. He began his political career as leader of a *zemliachestvo* (association of people from the same district) during his pharmacy studies at Kiev University (1895–1897) and had to pay for his activism with a short jail sentence. He settled in Minsk in 1898 and opened a pharmaceutical-bacteriological laboratory. He also continued his social and political work. With the protection of the legally incorporated society of medical doctors, Gershuni organized education circles, held talks, published proclamations, and took part in the foundation of RPPOR. Because the revolutionary youth of Minsk was soon drawn to him, his identity did not remain secret from the political police for long. Moscow's Chief of Police, S.V. Zubatov, had Gershuni arrested at the beginning of 1900. However, Gershuni successfully convinced his opponent that his freedom was necessary in order not to endanger Zubatov's plans for the organization of police-controlled unions.[47] As soon as he was free, Gershuni went underground

[46] See Zakliuchenie sudebno-sledstvennoi komissii po delu Azefa. Izd. Ts.K. P.S.-R. (no place given, 1911), p. 9.

[47] See Grigorii Andreevich Gershuni, Archive PSR 669 (identical with: Biograficheskie dannye, napisannye bratom Vikt. [orom] Andr.[evichem], NC No. 7, No. 96); G.A. Gershuni, Materialy okhranki. Archive PSR 501; V.M. Chernov, G.A. Gershuni. Rukopis', NC No. 232, No. 25 (largely identical with Chernov, Pered burei, p. 129ff); E.E. Lazarev, Zhiznennyi podvig G.A. Gershuni, NC No. 7, No. 96; V.M. Zenzinov, Na zare revoliutsii. Pamiati Grigoriia Andreevicha Gershuni. (Manuscript of an unpublished Gershuni biography), Zenzinov papers, Archive of East European History and Culture, Columbia University, New York (cited: ZP), box 4432 folder 4, p. 29ff., p. 48ff., for the Zubatov incident, p. 60ff.; also Gregori Gershuni, Sein Leben und seine Tätigkeit. (with articles from V.M. Chernov, E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia and others). (New York, 1934; in Yiddish); Pamiati

to work as a professional revolutionary. It was as a professional revolutionary that Gershuni became not only the "spiritus agens" in the creation of the party,[48] but also the head of the infamous "Battle Organization of the PSR" (*Boevaia organizatsiia Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*, or BO). He was also the SR most feared, most sought after, by the police. The police finally arrested Gershuni in 1903 and deported him to Siberia, but he escaped in 1906. After a triumphal tour through the USA, Gershuni returned to Europe just in time to take part in the second Extraordinary Party Conference of the PSR in February 1907. The surprised delegates celebrated him with wild ovations. The joy of the party short-lived, however: early in 1908, Gershuni died of tuberculosis.[49]

The PSR lost in Gershuni, without question, its most capable organizer and revolutionary activist – he was, so to speak, the PSR's Lenin. One must consider the impact of his death in any attempt to identify the sources of the many shortcomings that would bedevil the PSR in its later history. Gershuni was indeed a "political leader," a "tribune", a man whose future strength one can only imagine; he was praised as "one of the greatest political leaders of present-day Europe" in the obituary published in party's central paper. He was probably the only SR respected by the party's most bitter enemies, the Bolsheviks. He best embodied the SR ideal of the intellectual who was convinced of the injustice of the current social order, ashamed of his own privileged existence, and thus compelled to use the bomb and the revolver in order to free the people. More than any other party leader, he spoke of morals and duty. He derived his revolutionary action from an ethical imperative and his relationship to this action was emphatic, even "religious", as judged by the party paper. Because he had all these qualities of revolutionary elan, youthful-idealistic enthusiasm, the elevated style of the virtuous hero, the convincing power of an energetic will and, not the least important, a enormously appealing rhetoric in addition to organizational talent Gershuni was the natural leader of the PSR, its charismatic "living hero".[50]

Grigoriia Andreevicha Gershuni (Paris, 1908) (not very informative); Zaiavlenie Grigoriia Gershuni Zubatovu. Iz arkhiva Zubatova, in: Byloe 3 (March 1917), pp. 129–131. For Zubatov's "police unions" ("Zubatovshchina") D. Pospielovsky, Russian Trade Unionism. Experiment or Provocation. (London, 1971); J. Schneiderman, Sergei Zubatov and Revolutionary Marxism. The Struggle for the Working Class in Tsarist Russia. (Ithaca-London, 1976); A.P. Korelin, Krakh ideologii "politseiskogo sotsializma" v tsarskoi Rossii, in: IZ 92 (1973), pp. 109–152; I.N. Ionov, Zubatovshchina i moskovskie rabochie v 1905 g., in: VMGU 1976, No. 3, pp. 54–68. Detailed source bibliography in Smith, Okhrana.

[48] According to V.M. Chernov in a letter to B.I. Nicolaevsky; without a date, NC, No. 132, No. 23.

[49] See Dela o G.A. Gershuni i drugikh, in: RR, No. 43 (15 March 1904), pp. 7–17, No. 44 (1 April 1904), pp. 7–14; also as: Delo Gershuni ili o t.n. boevoi organizatsii. (St. Petersburg, 1906). For his imprisonment: G.A. Gershuni, Iz nedavnego proshlogo (Paris, 1908); in German, G. Gershuni, Aus jüngster Vergangenheit (Berlin, 1909). Protokoly vtorogo (ekstrennogo) s"ezda partii sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (St. Petersburg, 1907) (12 to 15 February 1907), p. 11.

[50] Pamiati G.A. Gershuni, in: Znamia Truda. Tsentral'nyi organ Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov

E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia lived in Minsk at the same time as Gershuni. She was two decades older than Gershuni, had taken part in the "Movement to the People" in 1874, was a defendant in the Trial of the 193, and thereafter banished to Siberia. As the "Grandmother of the Revolution" she enjoyed wide respect and prestige and was one of the most popular figures in the populist movement. The PSR profited to an extraordinary degree from her popularity when Breshkovskaia returned from Siberia in 1896 and became one of the most active supporters of the neo-populist movement. Her work was all the more effective in that she had in Gershuni a remarkably competent co-worker. Their respective talents were very effectively combined. Around the turn of the century Breshkovskaia traveled constantly and, using Saratov as a base, established numerous contacts and mobilized the youth. According to Chernov, her effect on the youth was like that of the "Holy Spirit." Gershuni then worked to channel this enthusiasm into effective work. Breshkovskaia's strength was the capacity to acquire, to stir things up, and to arouse enthusiasm. For her, revolutionary action was the call to rise up, to make a missionary appeal to emotions and spontaneity of the masses at last to revolt against autocratic despotism. It was no accident then that her importance diminished after the 1905 revolution: put simply, organizers were needed more than agitators. Nevertheless her name remained a symbol for the PSR. The public saw her arrest in the fall of 1907 as a signal that the star of the revolution in general (and that of the PSR in particular) was sinking.[51]

M.R. Gots was, for the Socialist Revolutionaries in exile, what Gershuni represented for the SRs inside Russia. He was born in 1866 as the son of a Moscow tea millionaire. His political views were influenced by the latter phase of Narodnaia Volia, and he joined its Moscow section in 1884. Arrested in 1886 and banished to Siberia, he returned in 1899 to settle first in Paris then in Geneva. Gots was nei-

(cited: ZT). Nos. 10–11 (February–March 1908), pp. 1–4, here p. 4. See Lunacharskii, Byvshie liudi p. 13. See for example a speech from Gershuni at the second party conference of the PSR: Protokoly 1907, p. 13ff. Pamiati G.A. Gershuni, in: ZT Nos. 10–11, p. 2. See the excessive glorification of Gershuni by V.M. Zenzinov, G.A. Gershuni – glava boevoi organizatsii, NC, No. 7, No. 96, p. 29, p. 32.

[51] See E.K. Breshkovskaia, Gde poznakomilis' my s Grigoriem Andreevichem Gershuni. Manuscript 1927, NC No. 7, No. 96. Citation V.M. Chernov, Letter to B.I. Nicholaevsky, NC No. 132, No. 23. For E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia: Hidden Springs of the Russian Revolution. Personal Memoirs of Katerina Breshkovskaia. L. Hutchinson (ed.) (Stanford, 1931); Hutchinson, The Little Grandmother of the Russian Revolution, Reminiscences and Letters of Catherine Breshkovsky (Boston, 1918); E.K. Breshkovskaia, Vospominaniia i dumy, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 4 (Paris, 1912), pp. 103–129; C. Breshkovskaia, Collection of Manuscripts, Hoover Institution. E.E. Lazarev, Babushka Breshkovskaia, in: Volia Rossii. Zhurnal politiki i kul'tury (Prague, 1924), No. 3, pp. 75–84; N.D. Avksent'ev, E.K. Breshkovskaia (k 85-letnemu iubileiu), in: Sovremennye zapiski. Ezhemesiachnyi obshchestvenno-politicheskii i literaturnyi zhurnal. Bd.38 (Paris, 1929), pp. 453–460; I.I. Popov, E.K. Breshkovskaia. Babushka russkoi revoliutsii (Petrograd, 1917).

ther a theoretician nor a talented speaker but his attractive personality, agile mind and inexhaustible energy were fascinating. He was rarely in the limelight during official party meetings, preferring instead to work behind the scenes. Gots was the only SR leader in exile during the early period of the PSR who was informed by Gershuni about the most secret party activities in Russia. He was the coordinator for the exchange of information between Russia and the exiles. His importance can also be explained by the fact that he financed a large part of the party's activities. Unfortunately, the mass of SRs did not know Gots; hence they could not fully grasp the consequences of the loss to the PSR when he died in 1906. He had suffered a serious spinal injury in a Siberian labor camp and, since his return, had been bound to a wheel chair. His death meant the loss of the "conscience of the Party."[52]

The fourth key figure in the SR leadership was M.V. Chernov – according to Gots, the man responsible for "writing" because he obviously had the greatest talent. Chernov was born in 1873 in Saratov as the son of a middle-level civil servant. At an early age he demonstrated extraordinary literary and aesthetical gifts. His political activity also began early. Chernov was still at grammar school when he first made contact with political circles and took part in a populist discussion circle directed by V.A. Balmashev and Natanson. For a passionate admirer of Nekrasov and Mikhailovskii, Chernov's participation in such populist discussion groups was self-evident. Towards the end of the 1890s the young Chernov published in Mikhailovskii's *Russkoe bogatstvo* a series of articles addressing current questions of philosophy and political theory, Marxism, new-Kantian ethics, and subjective sociology. Despite his youth Chernov was well known in the Russian intellectual world of 1899. That same year he emigrated and, in a short time, became the leading theoretician of the neo-populist movement.

It was he who created the program of the PSR. He also waged the ideological struggle with Social Democracy. Due to his brilliant speaking skills and powerful intellect, he dominated almost all party conferences. He belonged to all of the central committees. And while he did not have the decisive voice, his opinion was important in forming all significant party decisions. Finally, he could not be forced out of political life for long by any prison sentence. For all these reasons, Chernov was the most popular figure and the symbol of the neo-populist movement. But Chernov was also largely responsible for the tactical and theoretical immobility of the PSR and the Azef affair. More important perhaps, was his deficient leadership and his

[52] See Pamiati Mikhaila Gotsa, in: ZT No. 5 (12 September 1907), p. 1; L. [E. Shishko, M.R. Gots (Pamiati dorogogo druga), in: Byloe 1906 No. 11 (November), pp. 283–292; V.M. Chernov, Mikhail Gots. Rukopis' i zametki, NC No. 232, No. 22, which is largely identical with Chernov, Pered burei, p. 142.

neglect of organizational detail, weaknesses that led to his failure after 1907 to give the party the cohesion it needed.[53]

It is not possible to give an exact date for the foundation of the PSR because neither a formal founding assembly nor a founding party convention with the participation of all socialist revolutionary groups could be organized. The merger was thus completed in steps. Gershuni negotiated with Rakitnikov in early summer 1901 over a common "programmatic platform of the unified socialist revolutionary groups," even though the differences over the question of terror could not be resolved. In the fall Gershuni traveled to all the important committees in the south in order to receive their approval to begin talks with exile SRs. He then met Azef and Seliuk (representing the "Northern Alliance") in Berlin and was able to conclude the union of the neo-populist groups in Russia itself. Gershuni informed Chernov, Gots, and Zhitlovskii in Bern, and then challenged the emigrés to make common cause with the new organization. It was decided that the *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* would, under the editorship of Chernov and Gots, continue to be the central party paper outside of Russia and that Rusanov and Rubanovich would make *VRR* the party's theoretical paper.[54]

Although this agreement did establish a party that had significant promise and was certainly more sturdy than the numerous political sects which had previously dominated the populist scene, the SR exile organizations were, with the exception of Zhitlovskii's "Union of Russian Socialists-Revolutionaries" (*Soiuz russkikh sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov*), by no means eager to join the new organization. Indeed, as already noted, many "stariki" were reserved: they did not want to compromise their good name in international socialism by binding themselves too early to an unknown organization. Several "stariki" (Chaikovskii, for example) never joined the PSR.[55] The ASL insisted on the "maintenance of complete internal autonomy" and wanted only a "federative agreement" with the PSR. On the other hand, the expe-

[53] See V.M. Chernov, Zapiski sotsialista-revoliutsionera; Chernov Pered burei (with a biographical introduction by B.I. Nicolaevesky). The early articles are collected in: V.M. Chernov, Filosofskie i sotsiologicheskie etiudy (Moscow, 1907); See also: Cross, Victor Chernov; F.B. Randall, The Major Prophets of Russian Peasant Socialism. A Study in the Social Thought of N.K. Mikhailovskii and V.M. Chernov. (Phd. dissertation. Columbia University, 1961).

[54] See Chernov, Pered burei, p. 132ff; Chernov, Iz istorii Partii S.-R. Pokazaniia V.M. Chernova po delu Azefa v sledstvennoi komissii Partii S.-R., 2. fevr. 1910 g., in: Novyi Zhurnal No. 110 (New York, 1970), p. 280ff. (identical with ZP No. 4432 f. 1); Chernov, Letter to B.I. Nicholaevsky no date [about 1930]. NC No. 132, No. 23; N.I. Rakitnikov, Iz pokazanii N.I. Rakitnikova, NC No. 7, No. 100; Iz vospominanii [M.M.] Mel'nikova. Iz bumag komissii po delu Azefa, ZP No. 4432 f. 1; Pokazaniia [S.N. Sletova 22. apr. 1910 g., ZP No. 4432 f. 1 (very rich material); Sletov, Ocherki, p. 92ff.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 70ff.

[55] See A. Kubov [A.A. Argunov], S.N. Sletov (Biograficheskii ocherk), in: Pamiati Stepana Nikolaevicha Sletova (Paris, 1916), pp. 5–19, here p. 10; Letter from E.E. Lazarev to the PSR no date [1902] Archive PSR 451; Chernov, Pered burei, p. 158ff.

rienced members of the underground made no secret of the skepticism of the exiled intellectuals. Argunovs' derogatory remark summed up this attitude, when he called the exiles, "big mouths, who make great promises but can not keep them."[56]

Despite this fissure, which remained in the party till the very end, the separation between the PSR and the ASL was artificial and fictitious. Both organizations cooperated in producing literature for agitation and felt themselves to be bound by the same program. This literature was even written by the same people for we can state a factual personal union between the two organizations. As the party consolidated, the calls for complete fusion became stronger. Above all, it was Gershuni who was constantly pressing for unity. He wrote that "the League in foreign countries and the Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia were from the very first day one and the same organization," and it is high time that this state of affairs be recognized in a formal regulation of the relationship between the parties.[57] This regulation happened in the summer of 1903. Although the second(and last) ASL conference emphasized once more that the party was only entering a "federative connection" with the PSR, nevertheless the ASL immediately merged with the new parent organization, the "Foreign Organization" (*Zagranichnaia Organizatsiia*, or ZO). In the end, all socialist revolutionary exile organizations did finally join the ZO, due in large part to the persistence of Breshkovskaia.[58]

Even more complicated and difficult than the organizational union of the neopopulist groups was the necessary theoretical compromise. The new party was not ready to present the public with even a provisional program. The differences of opinion between the supporters of the Manifesto and the supporters of Argunov's brochures were not resolved. Even the joint programmatic statement from the editors of *VRR* and M.M. Mel'nikov as the representative of the Northern Alliance could not conceal these differences. Despite a subtle argument, the statement was limited to repeating the arguments from "Our Goals" and thus fixed a consensus that already existed.[59] It was this deficiency of ideological homogeneity that led Rakitnikov,

[56] Federativnyi dogovor mezhdu P.S.-R. i Agr.-Sots. Ligoi. Archive PSR 451 §1; also in RR No. 9 (July 1902), p. 18. Citation by Chernov, Gershuni. Rukopis', NC No. 232, No 25.

[57] G.A. Gershuni to the first conference of the ASL. July 1902. Archive PSR 520/1; also in: NC No. 7, No. 95; see also G.A. Gershuni to the editors of "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia". 25 April 1903, Archive PSR 502/7.

[58] See Kratkii otchet o vtorom s"ezde Agrarno-sotsialisticheskoi Ligi, in: RR No. 31 (1 September 1903), pp. 22–23. – Zasedaniia uchreditel'nogo s"ezda Zagranichnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., sozvannogo po initsiative Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R [15 August 1903], Archive PSR 125; Protokoly I-go s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R, Archive PSR 125; also: Okhrana Weekly Report No. 43 from 23 July 1903, pp. 1–3 in the archive of the Okhrana's Paris station, Hoover Institution (cited: OA) XIII c (2) f. 2; Letter from S.A. Rappoport to the founding conference of the ZO P.S.-R. from 4 August 1903, Archive PSR 306.

[59] See Nasha programma, in: VRR No. 1 (July 1902), pp. 1–15; also: Sletov, Ocherki, p. 95.

as early as 1901, to the conviction that prerequisites for the merger of the several socialist revolutionary currents were not at hand.[60]

The spring of 1902 was decisive for the process of merger in the PSR: peasant unrest in Khar'kov and Poltava provinces compelled what negotiations had failed to achieve. Peasant unrest established a consensus on at least one of the disputed points – the question of agitation among the peasantry. This consensus was shared by all of the neo-populist schools of thought that were united in the PSR; henceforth this point shaped the public image of the party. The revolts were signals that no one could ignore. The strength of peasant protest had grown; oppression and economic distress had reached unbearable proportions; even the peasantry's patient tolerance of hunger and poverty appeared to be at an end. No true SR could now doubt that the revolution in the village was within reach. The Social Democratic thesis that the increasing social and economic differentiation of the agrarian sector had destroyed the solidarity of the peasantry and so weakened its revolutionary potential appeared to be contradicted. A proclamation of the "Peasant Union of the PSR" (*Krest'ianskii soiuz PSR*, an adhoc organization) exalted with joy, that, despite wide-spread defeatism, the peasantry as a real agent of the Russian revolution had finally entered the political stage.[61]

When the father of Russian Marxism G.V. Plekhanov could comment on the appearance of the Manifesto by happily exclaiming that "the Socialist Revolutionaries are the flesh and blood of the Russian Social Democrats", and that "the Russian revolutionary ideas continually come closer to the principles of Russian Social Democrats,"[62] then the reaction of the PSR to the peasant unrest of 1902 must have forced him to rethink his beliefs. Russia's new revolutionary party saw in the peasant unrest the long hoped for chance to jettison pessimistic self-limitations and social

[60] See Iz pokazanii N.I. Rakitnikova, NC No. 7, No. 100.

[61] See the programmatic statement of the new course in: Ot Krest'ianskogo Soiuza Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov ko vsem rabotnikam revoliutsionnogo sotsializma v Rossii, in: RR No. 8 (25 June 1902), pp. 5–14; also in: *Sbornik statei Antonova, A. Bakha et. al.* Vyp. I, (Moscow, 1908), pp. 143–163, and: Po voprosam programmy i taktiki. Sbornik statei iz "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii". Vyp. I 1903, pp. 23–47; further: Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie, in: RR No. 8 (25 June 1902), pp. 1–5. For the revolts in Char'kov and Poltava see Krest'ianskaia revoliutsiia na iuge Rossii. (Berlin, 1902); L.I. Emeliakh, Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Poltavskoi i Char'kovskoi guberniiakh v 1902 g., in: IZ 38 (1951), pp. 154–175; G.M. Derenkovskii, *Leninskaia 'Iskra' i krest'ianskoe dvizhenie* v Poltavskoi i Char'kovskoi guberniiakh v 1902 g., in: Doklady i soobshcheniia Instituta istorii AN SSSR. Vyp.2 (1954), pp. 53–73; Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Poltavskoi i Char'kovskoi guberniiakh v 1902 g. Sbornik dokumentov. (Char'kov, 1961); S. Bensidoun, L'agitation paysanne en Russie de 1881 à 1902. Etude comparative entre le Chernozem central et la nouvelle Russie (Paris, 1975), p. 425ff.

[62] See [G.V. Plekhanov], Novoe vino v starykh mekhakh, in: Iskra. Tsentral'nyi organ Rossiiskoi Social'-demokraticheskoi Rabochei Partii. No. 5 (June 1901), pp. 2–4. For the PSR's tactical "change" see the polemic: Proletariat i krest'ianstvo, in: Iskra No. 32 (15 January 1903), pp. 2–4, No. 33 (1 February 1903, pp. 3–5; No. 34 (15 February 1903), pp. 2–3; No. 35 (1 March 1903), p. 2. Also Geyer, Lenin, p. 247ff.

democratic "prejudices" and thereby to find itself. The supporters of the Manifesto were pushed into the background and condemned to be a silent, but critical minority. A theory and a tactic came to the foreground that was solely oriented to the tradition of *Zemlia i Volia* and *Narodnaia Volia*. Only now was the rebirth of a populist party in Russia completed.

CHAPTER 2

Theory, Program, and Fundamental Forms of Action of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (1902–1905)

Despite the pragmatic consensus brought about by the peasant revolts in Khar'kov and Poltava, the theoretical-programmatic foundation of the PSR was nevertheless in a very rudimentary form in the spring of 1902. The structure of a comprehensive, sophisticated system of thought still had to be worked out; a system that could compete with Marxism and win supporters among wider circles of intellectuals. Three conditions had to be taken into account: (1) populist theory could no longer avoid recognizing that, despite the prognosis of Vorontsov and Daniel'son, capitalist development in Russia had made rapid progress; (2) it must maintain itself against a strong and organized Social Democracy; and, (3) it had to define its place in the scene of international socialism. The task of meeting these partly new, partly older but more immediately pressing challenges and thereby accommodating not only populist philosophy but also political practice to changed conditions was assumed by Chernov. He became the creator of a socialist revolutionary theory. His efforts culminated in a draft program that was controversial, but nonetheless accepted by the first party conference (29 December 1905 to 4 January 1906) without

major changes. Only the clarification of the idea of the terrorist struggle was the work of another Socialist Revolutionary, Gershuni.

2.1. Political Terror

The dispute over the recognition of terrorist acts as a legitimate political tactic had split Zemlia i volia toward the end of the 1870s but, simultaneously, was the cement that bound together several different revolutionary concepts and temperaments in the Narodnaia volia.[1] From the latter came the theoretical justification for this tactic and the PSR could, to a large degree, refer to this justification. The basic purpose of "political terror," which was understood to be the assassination of senior tsarist civil servants as representatives of autocracy or even the tsar himself, should be that it function as a *substitute* for the revolutionary activity of the oppressed masses in the city and in countryside. Terror was a *legitimate* and *essential* weapon, so long as the revolutionary movement could not develop, so long as the indifferent peasantry was hopelessly bound in bondage, so long as the urban middle class was capable only of sympathy and pity, and so long as the proletariat, which was regarded as the most approachable social stratum, could not be reached due to "ineffective propaganda methods and the use of violence by the government." Terror was seen to be the only instrument that the revolutionaries could use, given that they did not want to be satisfied with peaceful propaganda. In a situation in which the peace of a graveyard dominated society, only terror seemed to be the appropriate method (according to the *narodovolets* L.Ia. Shternberg in his very close analysis of political terror) of showing the people the means and the objectives of the revolutionary struggle "with the *fewest possible victims* and in *the shortest possible time.*"[2] The terrorist method resulted from the *isolation* of the revolutionary forces from the people. It was a consequence and an expression of the divide between a conscious elite and the unconscious mass. Only superficially did the tactic of terror stand in opposition to the tactic of "enlightenment" as it was practiced in the early 1870s. The essence of terror can only be understood when one recognizes, as was often remarked, that it was a *complement* to the "movement to the people." It was the reverse of the same coin and a symptom of the helplessness of the revolutionary avant-garde.

Political terror thus understood was a specific method of the struggle of the intelligentsia or, as Lenin's older brother A.I. Ul'ianov called it, in the end a "struggle

[1] Venturi, Roots of Revolution, p. 647.

[2] [L.Ia. Shternberg], Politicheskii terror v Rossii. 1884. Archive PSR 830/1, p. 16, p. 18 and p. 21. Similar: V. Tarnovskii [G.G. Romanenko], Terrorizm i rutina (London, 1881), p. 15; N. Morozov, Terroristicheskaia bor'ba, in: Da zdravstvuet Narodnaia Volia. Istoricheskii sbornik No. 1 (Paris, 1907), pp. 17–28, here p. 18; A.I. Ul'ianova-Elizarova (ed.), A.I. Ul'ianov i delo 1-go marta 1887 g. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), p. 379.

between the government and the intelligentsia".[3] In the place of those who were powerless, the "intelligent" not only took up the fight for the abolition of oppression and exploitation but he also chose the object of his action. The revolutionary struggle became a duel. Populist political terror was personal and thus meant conflict face to face. Therefore its propriety was bound to this personal character. Terror was held to be effective only as a weapon against individuals. Again, it was Shternberg who clearly formulated this position: "Our terrorists struggle against *individuals* and their personal interests – against the head of the dynasty and its most important supports." Where "terror fights not against individuals but against the totality of institutions, social strata or, and what is more important, against the economic interests of an entire category of persons, there it is simply inappropriate even though in these cases it may have a temporary personal meaning."[4] In other words, the tactic of terror should take its legitimate place only in a society in which domination is in large part personally manifested, in which the structural domination is still embodied in an individual and this does not simply present a mask. Terror loses its place in the same degree that domination changes its form in the course of the evolution of society.

The theory of *Narodnaia volia*, at least in its differentiated version, limited the validity of political terror in two ways. First, its application should only be allowed in certain backward societies and, second, only so long as the system of domination prevents the peaceful development of a free political order. Both parts of this argument assumed an unbreakable connection between autocracy and terror. Only because autocracy oppressed the people with arbitrary rule, bondage, and the yoke of exploitation; (to name just a few of the most frequent terms out of the socialist revolutionary literature), only because of the "abnormal social relationships in Russia," did the party feel itself compelled to resort to terrorist means: *A la guerre comme à la guerre*.[5] Consequently the reverse was true. Where political freedom was achieved and oppression abolished, terror was a crime. The famous letter of protest of Narodnaia volia Executive Committee against the assassination of the American president Garfield in 1881 clearly demonstrated this line of thought.[6]

At first glance it might appear that the PSR had simply taken over the philosophy of political terror of the Narodnaia volia unchanged. The PSR did justify the necessity of assassinations in the same way as the Narodnaia volia by pointing to deficiency of other means of political articulation. Gershuni wrote in the founding proclamation of the BO: "Robbed of every chance of responding to these crimes [of

[3] Ul'ianova, p. 379.

[4] Shternberg, Politicheskii terror, p. 34.

[5] V. Tarnovskii [G.G. Romanenko], Terrorizm, p. 15; Shternberg, Politicheskii terror, p. 50.

[6] See Zaiavlenie Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta po povodu ubiistva Garfil'da, in: Kuklin, Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia. Otd. II, p. 51.

tsarism], we, the conscious minority, hold it to be not only our right but our holy duty, despite all the horror with which we regard this weapon, to answer violence with violence; to revenge the spilling of the blood of the people with the blood of the oppressors."[7]

For the SRs as well, political terror meant the legitimate murder of the tyrant. Gershuni justified this position in a proud, courageous, and oft-cited speech before his judges.[8]

Nevertheless, the political situation in which the PSR renewed terror was essentially different from that which had led Narodnaia volia to use and justify this political weapon. At the beginning of the twentieth century, autocracy found itself not in a phase of consolidation, but rather had been noticeably weakened by economics crisis, the seemingly never-ending student unrest, and the peasant revolts of 1902. In addition, the revolutionaries could begin to hope that the apathy of the masses was coming to an end, and they optimistically registered the visibly increasing fermentation in the population. Some of the obvious new accents of the socialist revolutionary theory of political terror may be explained as consequences of this changed situation. Despite the dependence on the great tradition of Narodnaia volia, these new traits gave the terror of the PSR its own unique character.

One conspicuous feature of the PSR's terror was that, under Gershuni's influence, sober political argumentation, like that of Shternberg, tended to be ignored if not completely replaced by moral and ethical considerations. Terrorist activity was held to be "a matter of honor" for every true revolutionary. This position was especially directed against Social Democratic critics. Terror was justified by the "duty" to defend one's own "dignity," which was attacked hourly and daily by the "horrors" of the autocratic government and to atone for the injustice that the autocracy eo ipso embodied. Revenge "on the tsarist monster and executioner" for "the spilled blood of the peasants" appeared as one of the primary motives for acts of terror and the "hero of revenge" advanced to become the ideal figure of the populist revolutionary.[9]

With the moral element there came as well a distinct irrationalism and pseudo-religious ideals in the socialist-revolutionary justification of terror. These new aspects were very evident in the PSR's vocabulary. Rational consideration did not determine the terrorist's action; it was, rather, "hate," "spirit of sacrifice," and "honor." Throwing bombs became a "holy act," an "act of redemption".[10] The terrorist was

[7] [G.A. Gershuni], Boevaia organizatsiia Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. St. Petersburg 3-go aprelia 1902 g., in: Da zdravstvuet Narodnaia Volia. No. 1 (Paris, 1907), pp. 29–31. here p. 30.

[8] See Rech' G.A. Gershuni, in: RR No. 46 (5 May 1904), pp. 3–7, especially p. 6.

[9] [G.A. Gershuni and V.M. Chernov], Terroristicheskii element v nashei programme, in: RR No. 7 (June 1902), pp. 2–5, here p. 3. Dva pis'ma rabochego-revoliutsionera, in: RR No. 10 (August 1902), p. 2. Terroristicheskii element, p. 3.

[10] Dva pis'ma rabochego-revoliutsionera, p. 2.

therefore more than just a revolutionary. He was set on a pedestal high above the common party members and he was constantly surrounded by a special aura of consecration. He embodied the ethical principle of the revolution because he was prepared to give his life for the revolution. His self-sacrifice justified the violence that every revolution necessarily entails. This justification for terror obviously follows the christian model of penance. The terrorist as a kind of redeemer assumed the sins that every revolutionary committed in the course of his activity and did penance for these sins by sacrificing his life. A prominent Socialist Revolutionary summarized this argument thus: "The *act of killing* must at the same time be an *act of self sacrifice*."[11] The purists among the proponents of this theory of terror, which was strongly influenced by neo-Kantian ethics, demanded even more. They maintained that the self-sacrifice must be completely free from egoism, i.e., that self-sacrifice must "place the entire self on the altar out of love and only for love." Only then can the terrorist act be a "creative ecstasy," "the highest elevation of the human spirit, ... almost a religious hymn, ... a psychological idealism."[12] It was a bitter but, as will be seen, hardly accidental irony of fate that these emotional and radiant words were directed to the famous terrorist and later renegade B.V. Savinkov. The hero of Savinkov's first autobiographical novel became an assassin out of the simple, egoistic lust for self-realization, and was thus a dramatic offense against the official party justification of terror.[13]

But the PSR could also proudly point to revolutionaries who fulfilled the party's high moral ideals in an exemplary manner. For example, E.S. Sazonov, who killed the hated Minister of the Interior V.K. Pleve in April 1904 after a long hunt, and I.P. Kaliaev, who assassinated Grand Prince Sergei Aleksandrovich in February 1905. Above all, it was Kaliaev's deed that fascinated contemporaries and posterity because it demonstrated, in an especially pointed way, the ethical problem of the legitimate use of violence.[14] Despite the unfavorable conditions, he did not throw his bomb at the first opportunity because he saw in the Grand Prince's carriage not only the Grand Prince himself but also the Grand Princess and their children. Kaliaev completed his mission when he saw the chance to strike the Grand Prince alone. The hesitation of this terrorist, moralist, and poet to spill the blood of innocents served as

[11] Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 108. The Left Socialist Revolutionary I.Z. Steinberg, Justice Commissar in the first coalition government after the October Revolution 1917, later differentiated between the socialist revolutionary terror and the terror demanded by the Bol'sheviki. The terror of the Bol'sheviki grew out of the "commodity of bureaucratic and etatist rooms", while the PSR terror grew out of personal action which did not shy away from self-sacrifice. See I. Steinberg, Gewalt und Terror in der Revolution (Oktober-Revolution oder Bolschewismus.) (Berlin, 1931), p. 181f.

[12] Pomortsev, [M.V. Vishniak?], Opravdanie terrora. (Po povodu 'Konia Blednogo' V. Ropshina [B.V. Savinkova], in: ZT No. 18 (16 May 1909), pp. 2–8, here p. 7, p. 8.

[13] See V. Ropshin [B.V. Savinkov] Kon' blednyi (Nice, 1913).

[14] As is known, Camus chose Kaliaev's deed as a fable for his drama "Les Justes."

a constant example for the ethical purity of the revolution, for revolutionary *kalocagathia*.[15]

Because the PSR worked in a political situation different from that of Narodnaia volia, the party had a special interest in proving that the received tactic was just as effective under new conditions. Gershuni and Chernov attempted to do just that in the first programmatic article, in which the terrorist assassination was officially taken into the arsenal of SR weapons. They thereby went farther than the deliberations of their populist forefathers in systematizing the received arguments and working them into a canon for the political achievements of political terror. The proponents of terror would refer to these achievements right to the very end of the tsarist empire.

Terrorist attacks had three functions. The first was the defense of revolutionaries, i.e., in "self-defense." This effect was to be achieved when the state learned to fear the revolutionaries and so refrain from further injustice, for each individual representative of the state would live in the certainty that each of his measures would be repaid in kind.[16] Second, terror was to have "agitatory effect" in that it "evokes wide attention and so will awaken the most indifferent, narrow-minded citizen ... and force the people, against their will, to think politically." Finally, it was hoped that the killing of leading representatives of the tsarist state order would have a "disorganizing effect." Revolver and bombs were to force the state to look for support in society and make concessions.[17]

Political terror so understood was by no means thought to be a substitute for other methods, such as agitation and propaganda among the masses. Rather it should be only one weapon among others. Gershuni and Chernov emphasized this point quite strongly: "We do not want to replace the mass struggle, but instead want to complement and strengthen the struggle with daring attacks of the fighting avant-garde." Or, as another SR pointedly formulated: "We go to the masses with the booklet and the revolver."[18] Unfortunately, the officially stated equality of political forms of action remained merely lip-service and stood, as was shown in the history of the BO, only on paper. In the reality of thought and above all action, everything that had to do with terror had an absolute priority. The priority of terror over other methods was not only an important modification, a simple accommodation of the received theory to present conditions, rather it practically stood the thought of narodnaia volia on its

[15] See Steinberg, Gewalt and Terror, p. 181.

[16] Terroristicheskii element v nashei programme, p. 2.

[17] Terroristicheskii element v nashei programme, p. 4. See also: A.L. Ul'ianov i delo 1-go marta, p. 380; Shternberg, Politicheskii terror, p. 20; [A.A. Argunov], Osnovnye polozheniia programmy Soiuza Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, printed in Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., pp. 552–562, here p. 562.

[18] Terroristicheskii element v nashei programme, p. 4. Zhenevskaia gruppa [Protocol of a meeting from 28 October 1904], Archive PSR 125. See also: Terror i massovoe dvizhenie, in: RR No. 24 (15 May 1903), pp. 1–3; D.A. Khilkov, Terror i massovaia bor'ba, in: VRR No. 4 (1905), pp. 225–261.

head. Political terror was no longer justified as a substitute for the missing revolt of the masses, as a desperate alternative faute de mieux, but became de facto a universally valid form of action. Terror was held to be meaningful even in a period of increasing unrest and advancing revolutionary activity. For the PSR, revolutionary action and terror were one and the same. Therefore the ideal SR was not the theorist, organizer, or mass orator, but rather it was the terrorist. Thus Kaliaev could say: "A Social-Revolutionary without a bomb is no longer a Social-Revolutionary."[19]

When the programmatic article on the question of terror was published in the PSR's central paper, by no means did it resolve the old differences of opinion. Opposition to this line of argument remained, especially among the SRs in south Russia. As Chernov later admitted, his and Gershuni's statements were intended to meet skepticism and to intercept critical objections.[20] The committee of investigation looking into the Azef affair may have gone too far when it concluded, on the basis of its research, that the terror question in 1902 was still completely "open," yet its assertion did bear a kernel of truth. The truth was that only after persistent efforts of the party leadership was the tactic of assassination established as the dominant form of action of the PSR. And without a doubt the judges were guilty of only limited exaggeration when they concluded that the enthusiasm for terror was "solely the attitude of the ruling strata of the party" (led by Gots, Gershuni, and Chernov), and that this enthusiasm was forced upon the lower levels of the party.[21]

Nevertheless, defenders of the SR leadership resisted this line of argument. They held, correctly, that it was "extraordinarily simplistic" to assert that terror was approved as a party tactic only at the personal initiative of just a few leaders. The PSR resorted to this weapon because "the ever intensifying revolutionary struggle and the unbelievable increase in repression by the government in the end left no alternative."[22] The general dissatisfaction of society since the turn of the century

[19] According to B. Sawinkow, Erinnerungen eines Terroristen (Berlin, 1929), p. 30. Or: B.V. Savinkov, Vospominaniia terrorista. Izd. F. Kona, (Khar'kov-Moscow, 1927). Also M. Gorbunov, Savinkov kak memuarist, in: Katorga i Ssylka (cited: KiS) 1928 No. 3. (30), pp. 168–185; No. 4 (31), pp. 163–173 and No. 5 (32), pp. 168–180; N.S. Tiutchev, Zametki o vospominaniiakh B.V. Savinkova, in: KiS 1924 No. 5 (12), pp. 49–72.

[20] Chernov's statement before the committee investigating the Azef affair: Zakliuchenie sudebno-sledstvennoi komissii po delu Azefa, p. 11. The opponent of terror B.G. Bilit confirmed in 1909 that there was a serious anti-terrorist current in the PSR. He reminded the participants of the third conference of the socialist revolutionary foreign organizations; "The party fell into two halves; one half did not accept terror. Terror did not assume that place that one had given it, and [nevertheless] the party became a purely terrorist party. The other school of thought found many supporters." See Protokoly tret'ei konferentsii Zagranichnoi organizatsii P.S.-R. (23 March, 1 April 1909), Archive PSR 220/I.

[21] Zakliuchenie, p. 10, p. 11, p. 13.

[22] In. Ritina [I.I. Rakitnikova], Terror v 'Zakliuchenii Sudebn.-Sledstvennoi Komissii po delu Azefa', in: ZT No. 40 (February 1912), pp. 8–16, here p. 11.

had practically "bred" the thought of political terror. Violence appeared to be the spark that could explode the powder keg of revolution. As early as 1902, Chernov and Gershuni argued that only "bookworms" would fight a "war of ink" over the appropriateness or the inappropriateness of terror as a tactic, for "life itself" – as was often said by the PSR – had already decided this question: through the assassination of Minister of Education N.P. Bogolepov (at the beginning of 1901 by P.V. Karpovich) and the shots fired at Minister of Interior D.S. Sipiagin (on 2 April 1902 by S.V. Balmashev). The party had, however, given "life" a good deal of help. Balmashev's attack was the first prepared by Gershuni's special troop for political terror, the BO.[23]

It is impossible to resolve definitely this controversy. Both sides had sound arguments. There can be no question that the terrorist tactic of the PSR was developed "in the closest connection with the mass movement,"[24] and that the political atmosphere of that time was so tense that Karpovich's revolver "fired itself."[25] Nevertheless, it was also true that the former Narodniki and the *narodovol'tsy* in the party leadership had waited for this development and had fanned the flames of terror with all the power at their command. Even more, they approved Gershuni's trick of rolling over the anti-terrorist opposition by creating the BO without formal authority from the party and before the official inauguration of the terrorist tactic and thus presenting the opposition with a *fait accompli*.[26]

Controversy with the Social Democrats

Social Democracy did not view the new revolutionary party as a competitor. Indeed, Social Democracy was, at first, not at all suspicious of the new party and in fact accepted the PSR with good will. As we mentioned above, Social Democrats greeted the "Manifesto of the PSR" as a "true presentation of Social Democratic principles."[27] Although the differences between the two parties soon became so sharp that the chances for an organizational connection were lost, the RSDRP was nevertheless prepared to work closely with the new party. The Socialist Revolutionaries had a similar attitude. They noted with pleasure that the "Iskra" from issue to issue became more and more lively and interesting.[28]

The mutual admiration between SDs and SRs lasted but a short time. Expressions of sympathy came to an abrupt end at the very moment that the PSR became aware

[23] Terroristicheskii element v nashei programme, p. 2. For Karpovich's deed: Protsess P.V. Karpovicha, 14 fevr. 1901, Archive PSR 791/10.

[24] Ritina, Terror v 'Zakliuchenii Sudebn. Sledst. Komissii', p. 12.

[25] So E.E. Lazarev, Zhiznennyi podvig G.A. Gershuni. NC No. 7, No. 96, p. 12.

[26] See V.M. Chernov, Iz istorii PSR, in: Nov. Zhurnal No. 100, p. 284; Zakliuchenie, p. 21.

[27] See Geyer, Lenin, p. 251.

[28] See VRR No. 1 (July 1901) razdel II, p. 80. Also: Ne-stazhatel', Chto zhe nas razediniaet? (Pis'mo sotsial'-demokrata v redaktsiiu, in: VRR No. 1 (July 1901) razdel II, pp. 1–7.

of its populist heritage – i.e., the spring of 1902. A bitter feud displaced the erstwhile sympathy, a feud that ended only with the liquidation of the PSR in the trial of 1922. Only a few attempts at cooperation during the first revolution (1905) interrupted this feud. The conflict centered around the question of terror. The rather timid objections of opposition by SRs in Russia (there apparently being no extant records of the struggle in this early phase) were now formulated by Social Democrats in biting polemic. From the very beginning, Social Democracy rejected terror, if not in principle, then at the latest once Karpovich's shots put the question again on the agenda of debates in the revolutionary camp. In the current situation, Social Democracy's rejection of terror was that much more energetic.

The first objection maintained that political terror was the weapon only of the intelligentsia and had "absolutely no connection with the work of the masses."[29] According to such critiques, the old question of the Russian revolutionary movement – viz., who carries the revolution – was, through acceptance of terrorist tactics, decided falsely, since terror gave the intelligentsia an autonomous revolutionary qualification.[30] No less important was the objection that terror deflected a revolutionary party from its main task of organizing the revolutionary workers' movement.[31] Terror damaged the organization and meant acting in the place of the masses, instead of leading the masses to act on their own.[32] Political terror thus replaced education with simple sensation; it was only a duel, not a mass struggle. It also fed dangerous illusions, for it neither destroyed the state apparatus nor forced the masses to think politically.[33] One could only speak of effective "disorganization when the struggle of the really organized, broad masses causes the government to lose its head." Political terror was thus a senseless sacrifice of valuable revolutionary forces and hence weakened the revolution, not the enemy.[34] Finally, one should not fall into the deceptive belief that political terror could be used just like any other form of action. It was this argument that the Jewish Bund used, more than all others, in order to prevent the infection of its members by the tactic of terror. It warned that the opposite had ensued, "that the nature of terror is such that" it is driven "to assimilate and finally to choke off all other methods of struggle." Terror has "its own logic: an impatient,

[29] V.I. Lenin, Pochemu sotsial-demokratiia dolzhna ob"iavit' reshitel'nuiu i besposhchadnuiu voinu sotsialistam-revoliutsioneram? (1902), in: CW, vol. 6, p. 375; further: Lenin, Samoderzhavie i proletariat (1905), in: CW, vol. 9, pp. 129–30; Lenin, Revoliutsionnyi avantiurizm (1902), in: CW, vol. 6, p. 380.

[30] [Iu.O. Tsederbaum], Voprosy dnia. Koe-chto o terrore. Kak inogda liudi povorachivaiut, in: Iskra No. 4 (May 1901), pp. 2–4.

[31] Lenin, Pochemu sotsial-demokratiia, p. 375; also: K voprosu o terrorizme. Izd. Bunda (London, 1903), p. 38.

[32] See V.I. Lenin, Novye sobytiia i starye voprosy, in: CW, vol. 7, pp. 58-64, p. 60.

[33] Lenin, Pochemu sotsial-demokratiia, p. 375.

[34] Lenin, Novye sobytiia i starye voprosy, p. 61.

exclusive, despotic logic that tears down every form of protection."[35] In other words, terror and organization were considered alternatives – not complementary elements, as the PSR had argued.[36]

As we shall see, such objections did accurately describe the weaknesses and dangers of the terrorist tactic. The SD critics judged the situation more perceptively, for they never lost sight of the inner dynamic of political terror and its place in the development of the revolutionary movement, i.e., its function as a substitute for the mass movement.

At first, however, terror was confirmed as a tactic by its success. The echo of Balmashev's shots reverberated all across Russia and drowned out the loudest criticism. At one blow, the PSR won such popularity that an internal Okhrana report from as early as November 1902 stated: "At present, the avant-garde of the Russian revolutionary forces is the PSR."[37] The Social Democrats were no less shocked with this lightning-fast take-off, especially when one considers that the euphoria for terrorism also permeated their ranks as well. Indeed, the powerful campaign launched against the PSR by *Iskra* and the Bund reveals all too clearly that Gershuni's joy over the "epidemic flight" from the RSDRP was justified.[38]

Above all, it was Lenin and Plekhanov who fought this development by playing down the PSRs role in assassination of Sipiagin. They argued that Balmashev's deed was the revenge of a student for the blood spilt during the government's fight against unrest in the universities and certainly not the revolutionary action of a convinced Socialist Revolutionary. The PSR accepted Lenin's and Plekhanov's challenge and angrily repudiated this allegation. Plekhanov escalated the conflict by questioning the assassin's membership in the PSR and thereby casting doubt on the party's sincerity. However, this polemical attack backfired on Plekhanov when Gershuni responded by providing cogent evidence that although Balmashev had earlier belonged to an SD circle in Kiev, had switched to the PSR by 1901 at the latest.[39]

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[35] K voprosu o terrorizme, p. 24, p. 38.

[36] See the controversy between Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia and "Iskra" after the assassination of the Governor N.M. Bogdanovich by the PSR in Ufa on 6 May 1903 (s. Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 125): Massovoe dvizhenie i sotsial'no-revoliutsionnaia 'strategiia', in: Iskra No. 41 (June 1, 1903), pp. 2–3; response: Eshche o kritikakh terroristicheskoi taktiki, in: RR No. 26 (June 15, 1903), pp. 1–4; response to this: Eshche o sotsial'no-revoliutsionnoi 'strategii.' in : Iskra No. 44 (15 July 1903), pp. 2–3.

[37] See the Okhrana Weekly Report No. 7 from 11 November 1902, p. 1 and p. 5, OA XII c (2) f. 1.

[38] See G.A. Gershuni to the editorial board of the RR, end of 1903, Archive PSR 502/7, also in NC No. 7, No. 95; Belostok, in: RR No. 29 (5 August 1903), pp. 16–17. S. also: E. Mendelsohn, Worker Opposition in the Jewish Socialist Movement, from the 1890s to 1903, in: International Review of Social History (cited IRSH) 10 (1965), p. 274ff.; Mendelsohn, Class Struggle in the Pale, p. 131ff.; Geyer, Lenin, p. 261ff.

[39] See for this polemic the following articles: [G.V. Plekhanov], Smert' Sipiagina i nashi agitatsionnye zadachi, in: Iskra No. 20 (1 May 1902), p. 1. Une Réponse] Leaflet of the BO PSR], NC No. 7, No. 94;

Now it was Plekhanov who was the libeler and who must offer the evidence for his accusations.

All the maneuvers of Social Democracy to break the wave of sympathy for the PSR and the terrorist tactic were at first futile. The futility of the SD opposition to terror became all the more evident with the assassination of the hated minister of interior, Pleve, in July 1904 – an act that brought still greater prestige to the PSR. Even the liberal intelligentsia, which usually held its distance from acts of violence, applauded the assassination of Pleve. A noticeable change and a belated corroboration of the critics' admonitions about terror came only in the wake of the 1905 revolution and its aftermath.

2.2. Theory of Class

As opposed to Social Democracy, the PSR wanted to bring together not just part of the oppressed masses in Russia but all of the exploited – the workers, peasantry, and revolutionary intelligentsia. The PSR warned constantly that only a united front could defeat the common enemy of autocracy and capitalism. Only a revolt of the entire "people," not just that of a single class, could realize the revolution. Even the early neo-populist programs shared this fundamental credo.[40]

Equally unquestioned was the belief that the leadership belonged to the intelligentsia, this "salt of the Russian earth."[41] To the conscious elite alone was ascribed the judgment and knowledge to show the way to freedom. One attested to this elite the moral capacity for this task because it rejected autocracy out of disgust at the state's lawlessness and crimes. According to SR theory, it was an autonomous spiritual action that constituted the revolutionary intelligentsia and not, as the Marxists argued, a process of the socio-economic base, i.e. the capitalist industrialization of Russia.[42] Consequently, for neo-populists the avant-garde of the Russian revolution took a position above the classes. The intelligentsia was a group because of a common conviction and not because of a common class status. In fact the intelli-

[G.A. Gershuni], Vynuzhdennoe ob"iasnenie, in: RR No. 7 (June 1902), pp. 5–6; [G.V. Plekhanov], Vynuzhdennaia polemika, in: Iskra No. 23 (1 August 1902), pp. 1–2; Besprimernyi postupok, in: RR No. 11 (September 1902), pp. 24–25; Po povodu polemiki 'Iskry', in: RR No. 11, pp. 25–26; Ot Ts.K. Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, in: RR No. 1, pp. 26–27; Lenin's response: Vul'garnyi sotsializm i narodnichestvo, voskreshaemye sotsialistami-revoliutsionerami (1902), in: CW, vol. 7, pp. 43–50. Response: [G.A. Gershuni], Zaiavlenie po delu 2-go aprelia, in: RR No. 27 (1 July 1903), pp. 1–4; Response: Lenin, Sorvalos'!(September 1903), in: CW, vol. 7, pp. 335–40.

[40] See Ocherednoi vopros, 2nd. ed., p. 76; Nashi zadachi, p. 42ff.; Manifesto passim.

[41] E. Breshkovskaia, K sel'skoi intelligentsii, in: RR No. 28 (15 July 1903), pp. 6–7., here p. 6; See also: Breshkovskaia, K molodoi intelligentsii. 30 marta 1907, Archive PSR 168.

[42] L.[E.] Shishko emphasizes this point especially, K voprosu o roli intelligentsii v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii, in: VRR No. 2 (February 1902), pp. 89–122.

gentsia was even recruited "from several different classes" and hence could be "the synthesis of all active forces."[43] It is not necessary to explore further the very close connection between this high estimation of the revolutionary intelligentsia and populist philosophy. Populist philosophy bound together not only Lavrov's optimistic rationalism, his trust in the power of understanding and knowledge as the driving force of social evolution, but also Mikhailovskii's pessimistic conception that saw social progress, the division of labor, and the growing differentiation as tantamount to the destruction of the original totality, the diverse, naive human simplicity (while, simultaneously, embracing the idea of the individual as the conscious former of historical processes).[44]

SRs of all shades recognized the special position of the revolutionary intelligentsia as an essential element of the populist heritage. It was only on a practical level that differences of opinion became noticeable. It soon became evident that one group of neo-populists, the group later known as the Maximalists, used the prerogative of "avant-garde" as justification for blind activism and isolated blanquist maneuvers without the participation of the masses, and perverted this prerogative to adumbrate a so-called theory of the "initiative of the minority".[45]

Whoever wants to name the particular characteristic of the SR theory of class must point to the attempt to prove the basic identity of the economic situation and the political interests of the workers and the peasantry. The united front of the "working people" (*trudovoi narod*), the populist term for urban workers and peasants, was to give the struggle against autocracy a foundation. The PSR thus assumed the validity of the Marxist thesis that the proletariat, due to its place in the capitalist production process, is interested in the introduction of the socialist economic and social order – even though the PSR did not accept the historical-philosophical premises underlying this thesis. Even more important, SRs were often prepared to give the leadership of the revolutionary movement to the urban workers. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Social Democrats, the SRs directed this main theoretical effort to prove that the same could be true for the agrarian masses (i.e., that they could assume the leadership of the revolution) and that their needs were not simply satisfied when the remnants of feudalism were eliminated. The SR theory of class thus tried to solve a twofold problem:

(1) due to their populist heritage, the SRs sought to demonstrate that the Russian revolution must be a revolution of the majority of the Russian people – viz., the peasantry; and,

[43] I., Rabochee dvizhenie i revoliutsionnaia intelligentsiia, in: VRR No. 2 (February 1902), pp. 211–231., here p. 217 and p. 227. Also: Shishko, K voprosu o roli intelligentsii, p. 93.

[44] See Walicki, Controversy, p. 29ff., p. 46ff.

[45] For the Maximalists see below p. 115ff.

(2) because it was supposed to be a socialist theory and should conform to the thinking of the Second Socialist International, the SRs averred as well that the peasantry could be a carrier of socialist ideas.[46]

Chernov hinted at the theoretical basis of such a theory in his brochure "The Next Question" (*Ocherednoi vopros)*, with his comment that for both the worker and the peasant the only source of income was their own labor. The extra value was pressed out of the peasant in a "hidden, masked form" as rent, interest, falling prices, or taxes.[47] Alienated and exploited work marked the position of both oppressed classes in the economic reproduction process of society. The compulsion to work or the freedom from this compulsion, i.e. the type of income, was declared by Chernov to be a criteria to membership in a class. One of his very first articles on programmatic questions quite clearly expressed this central idea:

"In our view such a sign [for determining class identity] is above all the source of income. The division of society in classes is directly connected with the conditions of distribution (*raspredelenie*), and so the characteristic for the differentiation in class membership is primarily to be found in the area of income distribution."[48]

Chernov accordingly divided Russia's agrarian population into two groups: the "working peasantry" which lived from its labor; and the middle and lower "rural bourgeoisie," which more or less lived by exploiting the labor of others. The first group especially enjoyed attention of SR theory and practice. Chernov gave this group a very comprehensive meaning:

The working peasants are for us both the rural proletariat (those peasants who exclusively or primarily live from the sale of their labor and who are almost entirely robbed of control over the means of production), and the independent farmers who exclusively or primarily live on their own from the application of their own labor on the means of production (their own or leased from or owned by the *obshchina*).

Chernov assumed a "principle similarity" between the two groups because both were exploited "without mercy" by the capitalist economic order, albeit in different ways. Thus both groups were to be understood as one class, as the "working class" in

[46] The PSR was accepted as a full member at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second Socialist International. See Rapport du Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire de Russie au Congrès socialiste international d'Amsterdam. (Paris, 1904); further the other reports: Bericht der Russischen Sozial-Revolutionären Partei an den Internationalen Sozialistenkongreß zu Stuttgart. August 1907 (no publisher named, 1907); Russie: Rapport du Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire, in: De 1907 à 1910. Rapport sur le Mouvement ouvrier et socialiste soumis par les partis affilés au Congrès socialiste international de Copenhague (28 août au 2 sept. 1910). (Brussels, 1910); Russie. Rapport du Parti Socialiste-Révolutionnaire au Congrès socialiste international de Vienne (1914). (Paris, 1914).

[47] Ocherednoi vopros revoliutsionnogo dela, 2nd. ed., p. 9

[48] [V.M. Chernov], Klassovaia bor'ba v derevne, in: RR No. 11 (September 1902), p. 7; [Chernov], K teorii klassovoi bor'by. 2. Osnovanie deleniia obshchestva na klassy, in: RR No. 27 (1 July 1903), p. 13, also in: Chernov, K teorii klassovoi bor'by. (Moscow, 1906), p. 23.

the village.[49] The argument had reached its objective. Beginning with the question of the distribution of income the theory derived an understanding of class that above all included the great mass of the agrarian small landowners who did not employ wage labor.

Still, a difficult problem remained. How could the compatibility of property and socialist class interest be demonstrated? It was certainly no accident that Chernov failed to offer a solution. Instead he pointed to practical experience and tried to show that the "small worker-peasant as such is very receptive to socialist propaganda," or at least no less receptive than the rural laborer,[50] and explained the "partiality to land" of the landless as the effort to create a "minimum of relative independence and security."[51] The desire of the peasants for private property was excused as a consequence of need. Even though this argument may have been well founded, it nevertheless could not completely resolve the contradiction between the desire for private property and the socialist claims of PSR theory.

At this point it should be clear that the re-interpretation of the concept of class could not be successful without turning Marxist theory on its head. Although Chernov intended to work within Marxist theory and follow his "great teacher" Karl Marx,[52] choosing distribution as the basic category of social and class analysis meant practically the rejection of a materialist conception of history. In a polemical attack on Lenin, he recalled – correctly – that distributive relations do not simply represent a reflex to conditions of production. He also referred in an appropriate manner to the dialectical method in commenting that, in the recognition of a mutual dependency, there was a fundamental difference between "vulgar socialism" and the theory of Marx and Engels.[53] At the same time, there is no doubt that Chernov was as guilty of one-sidedness as Lenin (though in a reverse way) when he declared distribution to be the decisive factor.

Despite these difficulties, Chernov expended great energy in trying to demonstrate that his proof of the socialist maturity of the peasantry was completely in accord with the writings of Marx and Engels. He wanted "to understand" the fathers

[49] See [V.M. Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. I. Klassovaia bor'ba v derevne, in: RR No. 11 (September 1902), pp. 6–9, here p. 7; also: [Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. II. Proletarii-batraki v russkoi derevne, in: RR No. 12 (October 1902), pp. 5–7; [Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. III. Kharakter sovremennogo krest'ianskogo dvizheniia, in: RR No. 13 (November 1902), pp. 4–6; [Chernov], K teorii klassovoi bor'by: 3. Klassovoe polozhenie sovremennogo krest'ianstva, in: RR No. 24 (15 October 1903), pp. 5–9.

[50] Programmnye voprosy. I. Klassovaia bor'ba v derevne, in: RR No. 11, p. 7, p. 8.

[51] Programmnye voprosy. IV. Sotsializatsiia zemii i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No. 14 (December 1902), pp. 5–8, here; p. 7.

[52] See Protokoly pervogo s"ezda Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (29 December 1905–4 January 1906 in Imatra, Finland) (no place given, 1906), p. 136.

[53] [V.M. Chernov], K teorii klassovoi bor'by, in: RR No. 27 (1 July 1903), p. 13

of socialism "*better* ... than the so called Marxists."[54] Unfortunately for Chernov, he had serious difficulties with Marx, above all with the early Marx. One reads all too clearly in "18th Brumaire" that the peasantry does not make a class and is in no position to represent its political interests because it is only a social whole in the same sense that a sack of potatoes is a potato sack.[55] Chernov objected to this position of Marx, the most pointed anti-peasant weapon in Marxist orthodoxy, by maintaining that the proletariat was no monolithic block and suffered from disorganization and immaturity just as much as the peasantry. He claimed that "there was no qualitative, principle difference between the historical role of the peasantry and the proletariat."[56] Chernov emphasized further that despite its soundness and brilliance the Marxist analysis could not be simply applied to the collective peasantry of Russia. The major thesis of Engels' work on the "Peasant War" caused Chernov less difficulty because the PSR's position was that the agrarian population could only be victorious when it was unified with the proletariat.[57] Chernov did, however, criticize the thesis that Münzer's movement was doomed to failure from the very beginning. Even less could he simply accept Engel's strong support for the proletariat's claim to leadership. Chernov believed that numerous statements of the late Marx and Engels completely confirmed his position. He even claimed that the founders of socialism had fundamentally revised their earlier estimation of the role of the peasantry.[58] The Marxist positions on the fate of the *obshchina* and the possibility of a direct way for Russia to socialism were seen by Chernov as a clear anticipation of the populist position. Of course Chernov's reading of Marx was not very careful, for he certainly overlooked the most important statement from Marx concerning this question – his response to V.I. Zasulich, which deliberately left this question open. It was certainly true that Marx definitely limited the "historical inevitability" of the "expropriation of the peasants" to western Europe.[59] But Marx also maintained that the peasant commune could only serve as a "strong point for Russia's social rebirth" if the "destructive influences that are coming from all sides" are eliminated and the "normal conditions of a natural development" are secured.[60] And in his last signif-

[54] Protokoly 1906, p. 136 (cursive from me). See among others: V.M. Chernov, K. Marks i F. Engel's o krest'ianstve. Istoriko-kriticheskii ocherk (Moscow, 1906) (also under the pseudonym Iu. Gardenin 1905); Chernov, Marksizm i agrarnyi vopros. Istoriko-kriticheskii ocherk. (St. Petersburg, 1906); Chernov, Krest'ianin i rabochii kak ekonomicheskie kategorii (Moscow, 1906); Chernov, K voprosu o kapitalizme v krest'ianstve. (Nizhnii-Novgorod, 1905).

[55] MEW 8, p. 198.

[56] Chernov, Marksizm i agrarnyi vopros, p. 166f.

[57] Friedrich Engels, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg, MEW 7, pp. 327–413; Chernov, Marks i Engel's o krest'ianstve, p. 88.

[58] Chernov, Marks i Engel's o krest'ianstve, p. 45.

[59] See Letter to the "Otechestvennye zapiski" (1877), MEW 19, p. 111.

[60] See Marx to V.I. Zasulich, MEW 19, p. 242f. Chernov was unaware of the three drafts of this letter

icant statement about Russia thirteen years later, Engels was not prepared to decide this question. He let it be known that he did not give the *obshchina* much chance for survival[61] and that only an immediate international revolution could halt its decline. In order to claim Marx and Engels as the chief witnesses for socialist revolutionary theory despite such pessimistic opinions regarding the peasantry, Chernov was forced to the unconvincing statement that their new, essentially correct judgments tended in the right direction and all that was needed was the logical conclusion.[62]

Even Engels' later article in 1894, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany" ("Die Bauernfrage in Frankreich und Deutschland") was not very helpful for Chernov. Chernov did indeed find some useful statements supporting his position in, as he called it, "the last word of the creator of 'scientific socialism' " regarding the question of the peasantry.[63] Engels strongly emphasized the peasantry as the partner of the proletariat and, as opposed to earlier statements, praised their future role instead of writing them off as reactionary forces. That this expressed a change of accent[64] and a concession to the reformist critics of the Second International, above all Vollmar and David, was indubitable, and no one pointed this out with more satisfaction than Chernov, who never missed a chance to cite the "new Engels": "And we stand on the side of the small peasants".[65] Even more important for Chernov was Engel's statement that described the agrarian small landholder as a "worker," who differed from the modern proletariat only in that the he still owned his means of production.[66] Chernov discerned here his own definition of a "working peasant."[67] Nevertheless, this verbal, at best partial similarity between Engels and Chernov could not hide the fact that Engels' fundamental belief was diametrically opposed to that of the SRs. For Engels held to his opinion that the small agrarian enterprise was hopelessly lost and the peasants would sooner or later have to share

that contained significantly more optimistic judgments because they were published in 1926. See, MEW 19, p. 384ff. For this question see M. Rubel (ed.), Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, Die russische Kommune. Kritik eines Mythos (Munich, 1972), p. 56ff., p. 110f.; Walicki, Controversy, p. 189; H. Krause, Marx und Engels und das zeitgenössische Rußland (Gießen, 1958); P. Bachmann, Marx und Engels zu Fragen der obščina und der russischen Revolution, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte der deutsch-slawischen Beziehungen 2 (Halle, 1958), pp. 253–272; S.O. Zak, Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels über die "traditionelle" Bauerngemeinde in Rußland und deren Entwicklung nach der Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft, in: Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 1973, No. 4, pp. 147–164; K. Marks, F. Engel's i revoliutsionnaia Rossiia (Moscow, 1967).

[61] Friedrich Engels, Nachwort (1894) zu "Soziales aus Rußland." MEW 22, pp. 435 and p. 431.

[62] Chernov, Marks i Engel's, p. 130.

[63] Chernov, Marks i Engel's, p. 139.

[64] So Lehmann, Agrarfrage, p. 139. See also: D. Hertz-Eichenrode, Karl Marx über das Bauerntum und die Bündnisfrage, in: IRSH 11 (1966), pp. 382–402.

[65] F. Engels, Die Bauernfrage in Frankreich und Deutschland, MEW 22, p. 501; Chernov, Marks i Engel's o krest'ianstve, p. 144.

[66] MEW 22, p. 488.

[67] Chernov, Marksizm i agrarnyi vopros, p. 225.

the fate of the proletariat.[68] Again, Chernov had no choice but to raise the charge of inconsistency and accuse Engels of having overlooked the reality of his prediction, namely that it had "simply" not come to pass.[69] This critique may or may not have been true. It did reveal that, in the end, the creators of socialism could not be counted among the ancestors of SR theory.

But the PSR did receive theoretical support from the agrarian-socialist wing of reformist opposition in the Second Socialist International. Parts of what David presented in his comprehensive *opus magnum* reads like a textbook of neo-populist economics. Along with the neo-populists, he assumed that "the doctrine of the concentration of the agricultural enterprises" was not correct and that the basic factors of industrial methods of production (i.e., cooperation, division of labor, and machinery) were not as important in agriculture. David and the neo-populists also assumed that capitalist economic laws did not apply to the agrarian sector and so claimed that agriculture enjoyed a special status.[70] And Vollmar's demand that the socialist parties represent the interests of the "entire working people" did not differ much, as Chernov pointed out, from the main slogan of SR agitation.[71] This discussion of west European Socialism proved that Chernov only used Marxist categories as a cover for an unchanged populist theory of society. He began his theoretical career as the brilliant, precocious genius of "subjective sociology" and in the end never abandoned its basic assumptions. Chernov himself made it quite clear how little a Marxist he was when he proudly claimed that the PSR held to Mikhailovskii's "tried and true" formula and so wanted to represent the interests of the "totality of those working classes which are for us the people in as much as they embody and represent the principle of work".[72] The SR understanding of class was thus revealed to be a new version of the populist concept of the *people*.

Social Democratic Objections

Because socialist revolutionary theory claimed to be socialist, it provoked attacks from Social Democracy. These attacks are all the more understandable when one considers that the difference between claim and reality was all to visible. The PSR maneuvered itself into a disadvantageous position by elevating eclecticism to a principle. This may not have been a problem for the reformulation of pop-

[68] See MEW 22, p. 486 and p. 489.

[69] Chernov, Marks i Engel's, p. 157.

[70] E. David, Sozialismus und Landwirtschaft (2nd revised and completed ed., Leipzig, 1922), p. 680. Compare the efforts of A.V. Chaianov and the neo-populist economists in Russia to work out a theory of a non-capitalist economic system, see especially; A. Tschayanoff [A.V. Chaianov], Zur Frage einer Theorie der nichtkapitalistischen Wirtschaftssysteme, in: Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik 51 (1923), pp. 577–613.

[71] Chernov, Krest'ianin i rabochii kak ekonomicheskie kategorii, p. 7.

[72] Chernov, Krest'ianin i rabochii, p. 44.

ulist policies as a whole, but it was certainly true if Marx was to be used as a source.

From a Marxist perspective, Lenin was right in correcting Chernov's position *petitio principii* when he commented that, according to Marx, it is not work in and of itself but "rather only the social form of work ... or in other words: the relationship between people in accord with their participation in the work of society" that is a specific political-economic category. Therefore an analysis of society could not begin with the problem of distribution but instead "the essential characteristic of the differentiation of the classes" was "their place in social production and consequently their relationship to the means of production."[73] Peasants were to be regarded as small landowners and therefore agrarian revolutionary movements could only have an anti-feudal, not an anti-capitalist, character. Lenin pointedly formulated his early position by claiming that the peasantry "does not want to eliminate capitalism but instead to create a broad foundation for its development".[74] As a consequence of the success of capitalist relations in penetrating the agricultural sector, the Russian village would be torn by two social struggles at the same time. One struggle was between the land-owning bourgeoisie and the defenders of the feudal social structure; the second was between the land-owning bourgeoisie and the land-owning proletariat. The task of the revolutionaries was to accelerate these struggles and not to preserve a fictitious homogeneity of the village, which was the PSR program.

The differences of opinion regarding the role of the intelligentsia were just as deep and bitter. For the SRs, the intelligentsia was the leading force in the revolutionary movement. Lenin, on the other hand, did not even see in the intelligentsia an independent social class. For Lenin the intelligentsia was actually a petit-bourgeois middle class that only followed the prevailing social and political winds. The intelligentsia could be useful for the revolutionary movement only if it took the position of the proletariat and so, to use G. Lukács later phrase, committed class treason. Lenin reproached the SRs by claiming that whoever built primarily on this "unsteady intelligentsia" was in fact supported "by not one single social class".[75] And when a party absolutely refused to face the fact that the "only *real* revolutionary class of a capitalist society is the proletariat," then this party should simply be called a petit-bourgeois movement. The PSR's claim that its task was to unify all the oppressed could not

[73] V.I. Lenin, Vul'garnyi sotsializm i narodnichestvo, voskreshaemye sotsialistami-revoliutsionerami (1902), in: CW, vol. 7, p. 43ff., citation, p. 45.

[74] Lenin, Melkoburzhuaznyi i proletarskii sotsializm (1905), in: CW, vol. 12, pp. 39–48, citation p. 41. Martov made an analogous argument from the Menshevik point of view, Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery i proletariat (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 15ff.

[75] Lenin, Pochemu sotsial-demokratiia dolzhna ob"iavit' reshitel'nuiu i besposhchadnuiu voinu sotsialistam-revoliutsioneram?, in: CW, vol. 6, pp. 372–6, citation p. 373. Martov, Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery i proletariat, p. 13, p. 27.

change Lenin's opinion. In fact, precisely the opposite occurred. Lenin mocked the PSR's claim as the "trinity" of intelligentsia, proletariat, and peasantry.[76] The PSR remained for the early Social Democrats "the radical intelligentsia or intellectual democracy that became an independent force"[77] and consequently "a middle-class revolutionary faction" whose "middle-class tendencies" and "practical decrepitness" had to be exposed and attacked.[78]

2.3. Theory of Revolution

The question concerning the character of the desired revolution was perhaps the most intensively discussed question in the Russian revolutionary movement. Social Democrats believed for quite some time that a backward Russia would first have to go through capitalist development and at the same time must acquire the achievements of western European bourgeois democracies. The most important of these achievements were parliamentary government and the democratic civil rights for all citizens.[79] Only when the bourgeois-capitalist economic and social order had exterminated feudalism in Russia could the proletarian movement attempt to bring about the socialist revolution.

Unfortunately, the lessons of the 1905 revolution had showed that this theoretical conception of a revolution led to strategic mistakes. Because the Marxist foundation of this concept of revolution was modeled on the development of capitalism in western Europe, it was not appropriate to Russian conditions. Capitalism did unquestionably develop, as Lenin had demonstrated, yet there was no strong middle-class that could have organized the bourgeois revolution against the autocracy. Russian Social Democrats were confronted instead with the paradox that the workers and the peasantry were the carriers of revolutionary unrest – before, however, theory allowed such a possibility. Trotskii's concept of permanent revolution, although not taking account of the decisive role of the intelligentsia, offered the most elegant solution for this contradiction. He maintained that the proletariat must assume the objective function of the middle class and, by means of a process of constant change, transform the initially bourgeois revolution *eo ipso* into a socialist revolution.[80] Lenin

[76] Lenin, Revoliutsionnyi avantiurizm, in: CW, vol. 6, p. 389. Martov, Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery i proletariat, p. 13.

[77] Lenin, Rabochaia i burzhuaznaia demokratiia (1905), in: CW, vol. 9, p. 185; also Lenin, Osnovnoi tezis protiv eserov (1902), in: CW, vol. 7, pp. 51-5.

[78] Kommunisticheskaia partiia sovetskogo soiuza v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK. Vol. I (Moscow, 1953), p. 50.

[79] For example see the appropriate passages in the party program from 1903: KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniiakh, Vol. I, p. 39ff.; Geyer, Lenin, p. 287ff.; J.L.H. Keep, The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia (Oxford, 1963), p. 67ff.

[80] See; L. Trotzki [L.D. Trotskii], Ergebnisse und Perspektiven. Die treibenden Kräfte der Revolution.

drew progressively closer to Trotskii's concept until, by 1917 at the latest, he had in effect accepted it. But there remained considerable insecurity in the practical work, something that could be seen above all in the attitude of most Social Democrats toward the agrarian question. In the end it was the gulf between the Marxist development model and the reality of Russian backwardness that gave such importance to the question of whether the coming revolution would be socialist or bourgeois.

When populist theory joined this discussion, it did so primarily with the intent of contesting Marxist visions of the future and Social Democratic ideas about the Russian way to socialism. Indeed, populist theory can practically be defined as a reaction to international socialism. Actually, there was no inherent reason for populist theory to face this problem, for Populists did not share the same theoretical assumption – namely, the assumption in which historical development advances by means of a progression of social forms and the dialectical contradiction between the forces of production and relations of production through human appropriation of nature (i.e. work). The Populists had even less in common with the evolutionary interpretation that the Second Socialist International ascribed to Marxism and that Plekhanov handed down to Russian Social Democracy in an especially pronounced form.[81] Without this ideological baggage Populists thus could demand Russia's direct transition to socialism because, according to populist theory, bourgeois-capitalist relations were not yet dominant and, even more important, could not develop as was allegedly proven by Vorontsov. When Russian backwardness was thus for the Social Democratic theory of revolution a source of impossible contradictions, then populist theory had its starting point from just this fact. Backwardness was explained as the cause of a *singular historical chance*; in other words, Russia enjoyed, to use a famous phrase of Vorontsov, the "privilege of backwardness."[82] SR theory held fast to this basic assumption. Again and again, the SRs denounced as excessively rigid the Social Democratic thesis about the necessity for a bourgeois revolution to precede the socialist revolution. Behind this model were hidden economic deviation and un-revolutionary caution. Instead, the PSR insisted that the Russian revolutionary movement was a "synthesis" of the European revolutions. This PSR "synthesis" mirrored once again the general observation that the non-western countries had to "go through the evolution of their predecessors in a shortened and concentrated form" and that they had to "frequently combine *several* developmental steps in *one* period".[83] A more demanding attempt at constructing a theory of revolution saw

(Frankfurt, 1967); Trotzki, Die Permanente Revolution (Frankfurt, 1969); Trotzki, Die russische Revolution 1905 (Berlin, 1923). W. Scharlau, Parvus und Trotskii: 1904–1914. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie der permanenten Revolution, in: JfGO 10 (1962), pp. 349–380.

[81] See S.H. Baron, Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism (London, 1963), p. 112ff.

[82] V.V. [V.P. Vorontsov], Sud'by kapitalizma, p. 14; Walicki, Controversy, p. 116f.

[83] See Novye sobytiia i starye voprosy, in: RR 74 (1 September 1905), pp. 1–6, here p. 2.

the special quality of the Russian revolution in the fact that it would have to master "much more radical socio-economic problems" than its European predecessors. The Russian revolution would have to end not only the catastrophic misery of agriculture but also the unacceptable exploitation of the urban proletariat. But the middle-class was seen to be in no position to accomplish this task. Only "the forces that will profit from the coming, unavoidable socio-economic changes," namely "the proletariat, the peasantry and the revolutionary intelligentsia"[84] were capable of realizing these objectives. In both cases Vorontsov's dialectic of backwardness was the foundation. His dialectic led to the conclusion that Russia had to take *another* way than western Europe and thereby learn from the experiences of the advanced countries.

Despite its strong sense of tradition, the PSR modified the received populist opinion in this question. At least two innovations signified substantial change. First, neo-populist theory gave the problem of the bourgeois revolution more and more attention in that it was forced to separate the Russian revolution into a bourgeois and a socialist stage. In one of the very rare coherent statements about the character of the desired revolution to be found in the large socialist revolutionary literature we find the following statement by Chernov:

[In contrast to the Social Democrats], "we assume that although the coming revolution cannot be a socialist revolution, because the necessary subjective and objective historical prerequisites are not yet at hand, it certainly cannot be a bourgeois revolution. We are of the opinion that, in accord with its entire meaning, the coming revolution belongs to the *transition* period between the bourgeois and the socialist revolution of the working class that will bring freedom; a revolution whose dawn was the Paris Commune."[85] There can be no question that this concept has more than just a superficial similarity to Trotskii's theory of permanent revolution. Both Chernov and Trotskii tried to accommodate inappropriate development models to the peculiarities of the Russian socio-economic and political structure. Because both the SD and SR theories of revolution had to consider the specific connection between modern and backward elements, their respective positions came closer. This assimilation becomes even more visible when one considers a fact (often overlooked) that the PSR predicted the need for the establishment of a "provisional revolutionary dictatorship" for the transition phase between the bourgeois and socialist revolution. The "dictatorship" seemed to be necessary to secure the achievements of the "working people" and to prevent the early end of the movement.[86] The second PSR innova-

[84] See Evgen'ev [probably E.A. Stalinskii], Dvizhushchie sily russkoi revoliutsii, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner 4 (1912), pp. 131–176, here p. 174f.

[85] See Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. (August 1908). (Paris, 1908), p. 91; also: Protokoly 1906, p. 146: "Therefore we are living through the revolution of 1789, the revolution of 1848 and the era of the Paris Commune."

[86] See Protokoly 1906, p. 159f., p. 360.

tion, which was directly tied to the differentiation of phases, was the limitation of the party's socialist ambitions to the agrarian sector. Chernov argued that the transition from the democratic to the socialist stage of revolution could only be carried forward by making a "breech" in the fortress of the bourgeois state. This could best be achieved in the agrarian sector – through a "socialization of land" that eliminated private property in land and thereby would lead to the "revolution of the workers" (*trudovaia revoliutsiia*).[87]

What the PSR's chief theorist presented as conscious planning and strategic calculation was actually to a large degree due to the need to accommodate socialist revolutionary theory to Russian reality. The party still believed in the validity of Vorontsov's' and N.F. Daniel'son's economic analysis, namely the argument that the development of capitalism in Russia was limited because of the restrictions of the internal market. They remained true to their populist heritage and assumed that the debates of the 1890s had, for the foreseeable future, clarified the positions so that there was no need for a critical reappraisal. These assumptions can perhaps explain the remarkable fact that SR theory demonstrated little interest or desire for a thorough investigation of Russia's economic development. It was also significant that no important economists were to be found in the party leadership.[88] However, the Socialist Revolutionaries were aware of the significant economic changes caused by the forced industrialization of the 1890s. Even though capitalist expansion was slower than the Socialist Revolutionaries believed, nevertheless there could be no doubt that the predictions of populist economists were at least partially falsified. The PSR had to recognize that its theory of revolution could no longer assume the complete avoidability of capitalism, as did the Populists of the 1880s, but rather the theory was compelled to take account of its existence. The PSR did take capitalist development into account by limiting the validity of the received position and retracting the thesis of the impossibility of economic development in accord with the west European model and instead began to describe capitalism's *peculiarities* under Russian conditions.[89]

[87] Kratkii otchet o rabotakh chetvertogo s"ezda Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. (26 November, 5 December 1917) (Petrograd, 1918), p. 23. See also the articles by A.N. Bakh and D.S. Rozenblium (Firsov), in: God russkoi revoliutsii (1917–1918 gg.). Sbornik statei. A.N. Bakh, M.V. Vishniak et.al. (Moscow, 1918), p. 5ff. and p. 17ff.

[88] The Zemstvo statistician P.A. Vikhliaev (for Vikhliaev see N. Jasny, Soviet Economists of the Twenties. Names to be Remembered (Cambridge, 1972), p. 208ff.) and, until his conversion to the Men'sheviki, the economist N. Sukhanov [N.N. Gimmer] were probably closest to the PSR. Other figures who published in socialist revolutionary papers were S.S. Zak and G. Novotorzhskii as well as the well known representatives of neo-populist economics N.N. Chernenkov (in "Znamia Truda" 1911) and N.P. Oganovskii (in "Zavety"). Zak, Novotorzhskii and Chernenkov, however, held their distance to the PSR. Chernov joined the Kadets and in 1917 Oganovskii was among the legal Populists in the Peshekhonov circle.

[89] See Rakitnikov's comment at the founding congress of the PSR in 1906: "Naturally capitalism exists in Russia; naturally it develops. But it has its peculiarities, which make it different from the capitalism

Among these peculiarities the PSR program named the cooperation of capital and autocracy, the amalgamation of economic exploitation with feudal bondage in the factories, the small number of urban workers and the poorly developed proletarian consciousness. The coincidence of backwardness and industrialization promoted the destructive effects of capitalist methods of production to an especially high degree and gave capitalism an extremely ugly form.[90] If one wanted to save Vorontsov's "privilege of backwardness" despite the undeniable success of capitalism, if one still wanted to stick to the possibility of a direct transition to socialism, then one could realistically make these claims only for a part of the economy and society – the agrarian sector. The Socialist Revolutionaries continued to maintain that capitalist methods of production in agriculture had showed no constructive effects and only developed destructive forces. Capitalist methods of production impoverished the population and weakened the capacity of the internal market.[91] But economic development was evident in agriculture. The economic effects of Stolypin's reforms in agriculture came as a shock to the Socialist Revolutionaries, even though they greatly overestimated their success. Neo-Populism's theory of revolution was compelled to take this into account. Rakitnikov pointedly formulated the new situation thus: "The question concerning the possibility of omitting the capitalist phase in Russia was changed for us to the question of the possibility of *retarding capitalist development* at any given moment."[92] Once again the analysis of socialist revolutionary political theory ended in the conscious action of the revolutionary. This action was the final authority, the decisive factor in the revolutionary process. Consequently, the PSR's theory of revolution was very voluntaristic. The voluntarism of the PSR was the practical political pendant to the more general historical-philosophical idea of the "creative individual as the motor of historical processes," as formulated later by Chernov.[93] The subject took the form of a "revolutionary minority" that was to make the revolution. Whether reality tended also toward thought, as Marx would say, was never a burning question in socialist revolutionary theory of revolution. And when the party program spoke of social evolution, this by no means implied the Marxist premises that this process occurred "behind the backs" of individuals, rather the opinion that the "fighters for truth and justice"[94] consciously pushed this process for-

in western Europe." (Protokoly 1906, p. 110).

[90] See Protokoly 1906, p. 259f.; p. 109ff., p. 146ff. and passim.

[91] See Protokoly 1906, p. 359.

[92] See N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Agrarnaia politika pravitel'stva i nasha programma, in: ZT No. 27 (April 1910), p. 7. (Emphasis from M.H.). Looking back, Chernov condemned the judgment that the PSR was swimming against the tide of history: S.R. Krainii [V.M. Chernov], Sotsializatsiia zemli kak taktícheskaia problema, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 3 (1911), pp. 161–200; also Chernov, Zemlia i pravo. Sbornik statei. (Petrograd, 1919), pp. 118–240, here p. 205.

[93] See V.M. Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm. Tom I (Prague, 1925), p. 25.

[94] See Protokoly 1906, p. 335.

ward. Historical-philosophical subjectivism was tied to revolutionary elitism and the conception of the intelligentsia as the revolutionary avant-garde and natural initiator of the revolutionary movement.

But when the timing and character of the revolution depends, for the most part, not on the objective stage of development but primarily on the readiness of the intelligentsia to act and on the receptiveness of the masses, then it is obvious that such a theory of revolution had a pronounced tendency in seeing revolt as the means to revolution. A revolt was always to be attempted when an opportunity offered itself and when a sufficiently large number of supporters could be mobilized. Since 1902 the slogan of the "general revolt of the people" dominated the PSR's agitation. The revolt was the characteristic battle cry of socialist revolutionary tactics until World War I and was endlessly repeated, even in hopeless situations. When the spirit of Narodnaia volia lived on in the profession of the PSR to political terror, so did the enthusiasm for revolt perpetuate the optimism of the "movement to the people" in the crazy summer of 1874.[95]

Breshkovskaia was the embodiment of this continuity. Her name was the symbol for the revolt of the peasants. In the columns of the PSR's central paper, she constantly called for revolt and warned the party not to forget action. In 1904 she wrote to the party leadership: "I insist that the initiative of revolutionaries is also essential in the conscious armed struggle of the people against the government; that we should not wait until the peasants and workers begin, on their own, the armed rising." Even more clearly: "I believe that, at the beginning, it is better to make a few attempts unsuccessfully than to sit and wait for the revolt."[96] Her last comment cast a harsh light on the dangers of this new *buntarstvo.* Breshkovskaia recommended to the revolutionary avant-garde nothing less than the attempt to take up the struggle against the state without mass support and despite a high probability of failure. The revolutionary veteran represented without question a pointedly maximalist position. It was thus only logical that she became the patron of the younger, soon maximalist generation just as she wrote the lines cited above.

No less questionable as this misunderstood radicalism was the relative neglect of party organization – a consequence of the one-sided concentration on the revolution and tactics pertaining to popular revolt. We can see clearly the weakness of this position especially in Breshkovskaia, who before 1905 was one of the central figures of the PSR in Russia. Although she urgently called for a spontaneous mass revolt, she forgot that a revolt must be organized and that only organized action of the masses could bring about the fall of autocracy. One must therefore conclude that the voluntarist spirit of the SR theory of revolution in the end hin-

[95] See Itenberg, Dvizhenie revoliutsionnogo narodnichestva, p. 287ff.
[96] See [E.K.] Breshkovskaia, Primechanie No. 6 [1904], Archive PSR 118.

dered efforts at organizing the party and, as the attempts at revolts in 1906 and 1907 demonstrated,[97] simply diverted the attention of the PSR from this essential task.

2.4. The Party Program

2.4.1. Socialization of the Land

Whereas the socialist revolutionary tactic was characterized by political terror and the agitation for revolt, "socialization of the land" (*sotsializatsiia zemli*) was the essence of the SR program. Public opinion in general and the peasantry in particular (insofar as the peasantry could take part in public life) identified the PSR with this basic demand. And it was this catchword that dispersed any remaining doubts that the PSR represented the interests of the peasant masses. In practice the PSR thereby formulated a central demand of all peasant movements, including of course the Russian: the demand for land and "black repartition" (*chernyi peredel*).

Still missing from the earlier neo-populist programs, the idea of socialization of the land was born in the summer of 1902. Spurred on by the peasant revolts in Poltava and Khar'kov, the party lost its skepticism about peasant revolution and became receptive to incorporating this new element into its program. As Chernov later emphasized, it was a creation of the editorial board of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*, the exiled socialist revolutionary intellectuals – not the party organization in Russia. The new program intended not only to give the renewal of populist tactics a conceptual veneer but also to convey a clear idea of the party's objective to the peasants.[98] Socialization of the land (as part of the future party program and as an alternative to the Social Democratic demand for the "nationalization" of means of production) was presented by Chernov towards the end of 1902 in the columns of the central party paper. The attempt to develop a precise understanding of this idea became the subject of a vast number of articles, brochures,[99] and discussions, but – despite such

[97] See below p. 115ff.

[98] See Ot krest'ianskogo Soiuza Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. Ko vsem rabotnikam revoliutsionnogo sotsializma v Rossii, in: RR No. 8 (June 25, 1902), pp. 5–14, especially p. 7ff. Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 236.

[99] See [V.M. Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. I. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No. 14 (December 1902), pp. 5–8; [Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. IV. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR 15 (January 1903), pp. 5–8 (also in: Sbornik statei Antonova, Bakha et al. (Moscow, 1908), pp. 172–190). See further: V.M. Chernov, K voprosu o sotsializatsii zemli (Moscow, 1908); S.R. Krainii [Chernov], Sotsializatsiia zemli, kak takticheskaia problema, both also in the most important relevant work: Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, pp. 121–240; Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, especially; Chto takoe sotsializatsiia?, pp. 277–310; Chernov, K agrarnomu voprosu. Chto takoe sotsializatsiia zemli?, in: Narodnyi vestnik (St. Petersburg, 1906); K sporam o sotsializatsii zemli, in: RR No. 75 (15 September 1905), pp. 4–7; G. Novotorzhskii, Otkry-

effort – the various interpretations could not be standardized. Nevertheless, it is important to sketch briefly the development of this key concept in SR politics and its most common interpretations.

In introducing this concept, Chernov emphasized that socialization of the land was not to be understood as a new name for the known ideas of nationalization and socialization. While nationalization separated the peasants from the land by giving the land to the state, the PSR stood

"...for the largest possible reconciliation of the peasant with the land, but in every case on the basis of collective property, which will not permit the development of 'property fanaticism;' ...for the transition of as much land as possible into the hands of democratically organized collectives, co-operative, or neighbourly associations, the *obshchiny* and other self-administrating organs that are as close as possible to the people; for the collective organization of work on the land; for the existing solidarity among the peasants and the understanding of the usefulness of the socialization of work."[100] Here then were the three basic elements of a minimal consensus for a possible PSR program. One was a belief in the superiority of collective as opposed to individual production. Initially, at least, the PSR agreed with Social Democrats that the building of a socialist order had to begin by changing the form of production. Second, the program was based on the collectivist tradition of the Russian peasantry and the *obshchina,* the *sine qua non* of populist politics. In order

toe pis'mo A.V. Peshekhonovu, in: Russkoe Bogatstvo No. 8 (St. Petersburg, 1905), pp. 99–109; Novotorzhskii, Sotsializatsiia zemli (2d. ed., St. Petersburg, 1906); D. Firsov [D.S. Rozenblium], M. Jakobii: K peresmotru agrarnoi programmy i eia obosnovaniia (Moscow, 1908); R.R. [M.R. Gots and V.M. Chernov], Sotsializatsiia zemli (Odessa, 1906); L.E. Shishko, Po programmnym voprosam. 1. O sotsializatsii zemli. 2. K voprosu o minimal'noi programme (Moscow, 1906); Shishko, K voprosu ob agrarnoi programme v sviazi s teoriei nauchnogo sotsializma, in: VRR No. 4 (March, 1905), pp. 315–344; Shishko, K voprosu ob agrarnoi programme (Moscow, 1906); Sotsializatsiia zemli. Sbornik statei. Vyp. I, with contributions from L.E. Shishko, L. Zak., S.S. Zak, P.A. Vikhliaev (Moscow, 1907); P. [A.] Vikhliaev, Kak uravniat' pol'zovanie zemlei (Petrograd, 1917); Vikhliaev, Pravo na zemliu (Moscow, 1906); Vikhliaev, Agrarnyi vopros s pravovoi tochki zreniia (Moscow, 1906); S.S. Zak, Sotsializm i agrarnyi vopros (Moscow, 1906); Zak, Krest'ianstvo i sotsializatsiia zemli (Moscow, 1906). From the literature of the "Narodno-sotsialisticheskaia partiia": A.V. Peshekhonov, Na ocherednye temy. Nasha platforma (eia ocherlaniia i razmery), in: Russkoe Bogatstvo, August 1906, otdel II, pp. 178–206; Peshekhonov, Pravo na zemliu (natsionalizatsiia i sotsializatsiia) (Petrograd, 1917); Peshekhonov, Natsionalizatsiia zemli ili kak trudovaia (narodno-sotsialisticheskaia) partiia shchitaet neobkhodimym razreshit' zemel'nyi vopros (Petrograd, 1917); Peshekhonov, Krest'iane i rabochie v ikh vzaimnykh otnosheniiakh (St. Petersburg, 1905); Peshekhonov, Sushchnost'agrarnoi problemy (St. Petersburg, 1906). From the Maximalist side see among others: E. Ustinov [E.Iu. Lozinskii] Kakova dolzhna byt' programma russkoi revoliutsii? (Geneva, 1905); A. Komov [Ia.L. Iudelevskii], K voprosu o teoreticheskikh osnovakh sotsialisticheskoi programmy (no place given, 1907), as well as the main theoretical work of maximalism: E. Tagin [A.G. Troitskii], Printsipy trudovoi teorii (St. Petersburg, 1906).

[100] See Programmnye voprosy. IV. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No. 15 (January 1903), p. 8.

to sustain and strengthen the commune, the party recommended the creation of "as many social associations and economic co-operatives as possible."[101] Finally, the central idea of socialization of the land was the transfer of all private property into a collective land fund, from which every peasant would receive a certain allotment for "egalitarian use" (*uravnitel'noe pol'zovanie*) but which should not be given to him as private property. The right of eminent domain over all land was to be held by local, self-administered institutions. This meant that the post-revolutionary society for the SRs had a very strong decentralized character.

In May 1904, the PSR central paper printed a draft of the party program defining its conception of the socialization of land. This draft came unmistakably from Chernov's pen.[102] His draft was innovative above all because its language was more precise and because he introduced new concepts that would soon be part of the standard repertoire of SR vocabulary. It is important to note that these innovations were more than just matters of style. He replaced the term private property (*sobstvennost'*), which he had used as late as 1902, by the term "general people's property" (*obshchenarodnoe dostoianie*). This new terminology was intended to make absolutely clear that categorically different legal relationships would be dominant in a socialist society. Chernov justified the changes: "It must be evident that we are, so to speak, moving to a completely different level,"[103] a level that cannot be described adequately with the received legal concepts of Roman law. In his view, the concept of "juridical entity" (which formed the basis of the bourgeois concept of private property) lost all foundation, for the very act of socialization of the land could not be equated with the transfer of property rights from one legal person to another. Those who ask for the subject of law revealed only their ignorance of the peculiarities of the new society, for "the character of the law in land" has itself changed: "We succeeded ... in reaching the idea of the complete freedom of land from ... 'holy private property' to the idea of transformation of land into *general affiliation.* This is the idea of the *socialization of land.*"[104] Chernov formulated his point still more sharply: "We will neutralize the land. It is just as *neutrum* that the land will be transferred to *the general property of the people.*"[105] Chernov's understanding of this question may have been theoretically rigorous, and his new terminology may have been suggestive and have struck the right note for some, but it did not contribute

[101] See Ot Krest'ianskogo Soiuza P.S.-R, in: RR No. 8, p. 11.

[102] See Proekt programmy Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, vyrabotannyi redaktsiei, 'Revoliutsionnoi Rossii', in: RR No. 46 (5 May 1904), pp. 1–3.

[103] See Protokoly 1906, p. 222f. Perrie, Agrarian policy p. 146ff., suppresses this intention when she translates "dostoianie" with "possession."

[104] See V.M. Chernov, K voprosu o sotsializatsii zemli, citation, p. 64; also Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, pp. 158–159; Protokoly 1906, p. 160, p. 221ff. and above.

[105] Protokoly 1906, p. 220; Zemlia i pravo, p. 130.

much to making the socialist revolutionary agrarian more concrete. Several speakers noted this failure during debates at the first PSR party council.[106]

Socialization of the land, in this sense, was to part of the minimal catalogue of socialist revolutionary demands – i.e., it was not intended to break the bounds of the given autocratic order, even though these demands tended to overstep its boundaries. Chernov had already formulated this modification in 1902.[107] However, only his later statements revealed the significant consequences for his position, namely, that the revolutionary point of the neo-populist program must be dulled. Chernov achieved this "pacification" by means of a rigorous distinction between the form of production and the form of property. From 1904, this distinction increasingly dominated his commentary. As he himself explained: "The socialization of the land alone by no means decides the question of the *form of production*, rather ... only the question of the *form of property* in a certain type of good, namely the surface and the interior of the earth. It is one thing to decide who the property owner is, in whose hands the final disposition of the land is placed; it is another thing to decide how the land is to be put to productive use."[108] It was therefore absolutely incorrect and theoretically false to equate the socialization of the land with the socialization of the factories, because the socialization of the factories *directly* touched the structure of production and signified a qualitative change. With this Chernov not only distanced the SR program from Maximalist interpretations, which was his intention, but at the same time he practically ignored a basic element of his own original definition. Chernov more or less ceased to speak about the socialization of work and about the advantages accruing from collective production. Despite statements to the contrary, the socialization of land was reduced to the simple exchange of property relations.

The editorial board of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* presented the socialist revolutionary agrarian program to the first PSR party conference at the end of December 1905. The program underwent its baptism of fire and was approved by the majority of delegates with only minor changes. One of the more important was the requirement that SR politics should be "based" on the collective tradition of the Russian peasantry, rather than to "use" that tradition as Chernov had stated.[109] The final version of the PSRs agrarian program, which was to remain

[106] For example M.V. Vishniak ("Pomortsev"), Protokoly 1906, pp. 194–196 and O.S. Minor ("Solomin"), p. 203.

[107] See Programmnye voprosy. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No. 14 (December 1902)., p. 6.

[108] [V.M. Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. Sotsializatsiia zemli i programma-minimum, in: RR No. 42 (1 March 1904), p. 3; also [Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. Programma-maksimum i programma minimum, in: RR 41 (15 February 1904), pp. 5–8.

[109] Protokoly 1906, p. 362. Chernov later complained about this change. See Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, pp. 209–210.

unchanged until the end of socialist revolutionary activity in Russia, stated the following:

"In the interest of socialism and the struggle against bourgeois tendencies, which are directed at the creation of private property, the Socialist Revolutionary Party bases its views on the question of a reform of relationships to the land on the beliefs, traditions, and forms of existence of the Russian peasantry regarding land possession, land work and especially the conviction of the peasantry that no one may possess working land as private property and that only work gives the right to the products of the land. In accord with its fundamental beliefs concerning the tasks of the revolution in the countryside, the party demands the socialization of land, i.e., the removal of land from trade and the transfer of land from the private property of individuals or groups into national property on the following basis: All the land (settlements, emigration, administration of the land reserve fund etc.) is to be transferred to the disposition of central and local organs of self-administration (from the democratically organized urban and agrarian communities to the provincial and central institutions). The use of the land must be based on the principle of equality and the sole work of the individual, i.e. on the basis of the individual or co-operative work the use of the land must insure that each person can satisfy a minimum of his needs; the basic rent must be transformed into a special tax for covering common expenses, the use of land that does not have specific local importance (common forests, fishing etc.) is to be organized by the appropriate organs of self-administration; land works and mines remain property of the state; land will be nationalized without compensation for the owners; those who suffer losses as a consequence of this change of property relations have the right to state support during the period in which they must accommodate themselves to the new conditions."[110]

Even though a large majority of the party conference delegates agreed to this formulation concerning the socialization of the land, deep differences about the exact contents of this demand were evident. Lively and polemical debates revealed all to clearly how uncertain and ambiguous the party agrarian program still was, despite or even because of the many clarifying articles in the central party paper and other publications. Socialization became more of a slogan than a party platform. Opinion was especially sharply divided over the decisive question of which institution was

[110] Protokoly 1906, p. 363f. German translation, in: Bericht der Russischen Sozial- Revolutionären Partei an den Internationalen Sozialistenkongreß zu Stuttgart, p. 32f. See also the terminologically not always successful translation by: P. Scheibert (ed.), Die russischen politischen Parteien von 1905 bis 1917. Ein Dokumentationsband (Darmstadt, 1972), p. 31ff., here: p. 37f. For the socialist revolutionary understanding of the key category "rent" see further: S.S. Zak, Sotsializatsiia zemli i pozemel'naia renta, in: Sotsializatsiia zemli. Sbornik statei, pp. 107–140. Zak maintained that rents would be eliminated along with the elimination of private property (p. 137).

to control the land fund and how this institution was to be constituted.[111] Based on the answers to this question we can identify three interpretations that Chernov later identified as syndicalism, corporativism, and nationalization.[112] These three interpretations were put forward by the three factions that emerged in the PSR during 1905: (1) the right wing around the editorial board of the *Russkoe Bogatstvo* (the paper of "Legal Populism"),[113] which included well-known writers like Peshekhonov, Annenskii and Miakotin;[114] (2) the center, i.e. the PSR strictly speaking which was represented by Chernov; and, (3) the extreme left wing, whose main advocate was the delegate from the SR committee in Vitebsk, Ginzburg.[115]

Soon after the party congress began, the controversies between the factions assumed such an uncompromising character that during the debates "Legal Populists" officially declared their withdrawal from the party (even though they never fully belonged to the PSR) and left the assembly. The Maximalists did practically the same, although they formally separated only about a year later. The conflicting interpretations regarding the socialization of the land was thus only one aspect of broader theoretical and tactical differences of opinion and one litmus test on which the united neo-populist front from the extreme right to the extreme left was shattered.

The protest of the moderate Populists and the later founders of the Popular-Socialist Party (*Narodno-Sotsialisticheskaia Partiia*) was sparked by the terminology of Chernov's draft program. As Annenskii explained: "We would prefer to use the term 'nationalization' (*natsionalizatsiia*) instead of 'socialization.' We would like to take the land out of the sector of private property and transfer the use of the land to the entire people, to make it, for the lack of a better term, the 'property' (*obstvennost'*) of the people. This idea is expressed by the word 'nationalization.' "[116] Annenskii emphasized that this concept is not to be equated with the understanding that west Europeans, such as H. George and others,[117] had of the same terms. For Annenskii and the moderate Populists, nationalization meant that only "*supreme* domain of the state with respect to the land" would be recognized, while at the same time the use of the land would be given to *all* workers and the "direct disposition" transferred to

[111] See the speech of the delegate from Odessa D.S. Rozenblium ("Firsov"), Protokoly 1906, p. 186f.

[112] See Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, p. 284ff.

[113] See A.P. Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia; N.D. Erofeev, Liberal'nye narodniki zhurnala "Russkoe Bogatstvo" v 1905 g., in: VMGU 1973 No. 3, pp. 32–46.

[114] In the party protocols they have the pseudonyms "Turskii" (Peshekhonov), "Korenev" (Annenskii) and "Rozhdestvenskii" (Miakotin).

[115] Pseudonym probably "Poroshin", although this is not definitive.

[116] See Protokoly, 1906, p. 89.

[117] Annenskii referred here to the "Guild Socialism" of the Fabian Society. See G.D.H. Cole, The Second International. 1889–1914, Vol. I (London, 1970), p. 209ff. and p. 222ff. (= A History of Social Thought, Vol. III, 1); B. Gustafsson, Marxismus und Revisionismus. Eduard Bernsteins Kritik des Marxismus und ihre ideengeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen, Vol. I (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 146f.

the "immediate directors of small local communities." Thus, on the one hand, the dominance of a powerful state would be limited. The idea of nationalization was decentralized and favorable to the peasantry; it certainly followed Chernov's argument. But Annenskii warned against giving the land "only to the local communities" and persisted in his opposition to the term "socialization" on the grounds that it could lead to misunderstandings. The "Legal Populists" wanted to give the right to implement the overdue "agrarian reform" (sic!) to the *state* and its highest law giving organ, the Constituent Assembly. Annenskii made this view perfectly clear: "The state lays its hand on everything, including *obshchina*-land;" but it could do this only "through the organized will of the people and in an orderly fashion".[118]

Annenskii and his colleagues gave Chernov enough arguments to brandmark the People's Socialists and the heirs of Mikhailovskii, despite their own understanding of their position, as nationalizers and as such Chernov counted them among his arch-enemies. He criticized their concept of nationalization by arguing that "in essence it is founded on bourgeois principles." Nationalization according to Annenskii approved of the capitalist order and saw the root of all evil only in the activity of a "foreign" power, i.e. monopoly capitalism embodied in private property of land. Consequently Annenskii had fallen into error by believing that the mere elimination of "the monopoly aspect of property" meant the abolition of exploitation.[119] Chernov argued that just the opposite would occur: under the conditions given in Russia at that time, the nationalization of land would only make the yoke of bureaucracy worse and strengthen autocracy.[120] He later summarized his objections against nationalization in the following points and at the same time he offered a more precise and detailed description of the idea of socialization.

(1) Nationalization of land is organized from above, socialization from below.

(2) Nationalization essentially does not touch property rights but transfers the land to a central power; socialization does not transfer the land "anywhere" because it abolishes the concept of property itself.

(3) Nationalization distributes land by means of administrative decisions to individuals under conditions that correspond to the changing plans of the central power; socialization assumes a fundamental charter of the rights of individual users considering the equality of common citizen rights to land, rights that were won only through work.

(4) Nationalization of land requires bureaucratic institutions; socialization real-

[118] See Protokoly 1906, p. 89.

[119] See Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 134.

[120] See Programmnye voprosy. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No. 15, p. 7.

izes the principles of economic democracy primarily through the organs of an autonomous "public of the working classes" (*trudovaia obshchestvennost'*).

(5) Nationalization of land takes private interests completely into the disposition of public institutions; socialization assumes a synthesis between private and public right, the synthesis of the principles of economic corporativism and political democracy.[121]

While the "Legal Populists" on the right wing of the neo-populist movement wanted to organize property relationships in land alone by means of the state, the future Maximalists on the left wing took exactly the opposite position. The state should not even take part in this process. The "Legal Populists" pleaded for an agrarian reform from above while the Maximalists wanted an agrarian revolution from below. Ginzburg argued that after the revolution it would be a great mistake to transfer land and mineral rights to the state, because it would still be the old bourgeois state and such an approach would thus only strengthen the enemy. The transfer of land rights to the individual was also out of the question because this would simply end with the restoration of the "ancien regime." The revolution can only help the oppressed when it transfers land to organs of peasant self-administration, such as the commune or territorial groups of communes. According to Ginzburg, entrance to these organs should be reserved only for the lower classes, i.e., entrance should depend on class membership. He certainly did see the danger that the peasants could develop an egotistical caste mentality and deny the less privileged classes access to the use of land. To counter this danger, he suggested the establishment of mixed committees "from representatives of the peasants and the urban working class." These committees were to guarantee "all workers" the right to participate in the organs of self-administration and at the same time secure the bond between city and countryside.[122]

Chernov criticized this Maximalist understanding of socialization of land just as harshly as he had attacked the concept of nationalization. He accused Ginzburg of having an undemocratic mentality and maintained that his model would carry violence and force into the society after the revolution. He argued that, when the right to use land is the only source of wealth and when this source is given to class institutions, then everyone is forced to join these institutions. Those who do not fulfill the class requirements for membership are excluded from using the land. This contradicts the principle of freedom as the essential foundation of a socialist order.[123] Chernov's critique did, in a certain sense, anticipate the possibility of post revolutionary terror as introduced by Stalin a quarter century later, and one is inclined to

[121] See Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, p. 289.
[122] See Protokoly 1906, p. 181ff.; citation, p. 183.
[123] See Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, pp. 138–139; Protokoly 1906, p. 230ff.

applaud his alert defense of the pure idea of socialist workers' democracy.[124] Nevertheless his criticism was too simplistic, and he himself became entangled in contradictions. He did not sufficiently consider that no revolution occurs without violence; *per definitionem* it changes existing relations of power and ownership. He further ignored the problem of what was to happen with the elites of the "ancien regime" in the new society by assuming that they would simply and without resistance accommodate themselves to the new egalitarian principles. Chernov's objections were based on the utopian assumption that the revolution could quickly and without violence create a socially completely homogeneous society.

The interpretation of "socialization of the land" finally approved by the party congress came from the SR leadership, especially Chernov. It was designated the corporative solution. This solution took a middle position between the syndicalism of the left and the "etatism" of the right. In the post-revolutionary society, the left wanted to entrust the right to dispose of land to unionized peasant and workers organizations, while the right wanted to give the land to the state. Chernov, however, declared such ideas to be flawed, for they overlooked the fundamentally different legal relationships between the capitalist and socialist orders. Property as such would be abolished and replaced by a "right to land" that belonged to "the entirety of all citizens in its present composition." The right to land is, "in other words, a general right of citizenship; i.e. each citizen" would "receive the same right to land, or to put it another way, the right of the individual citizen" would be "limited by the same right of another citizen".[125] Consequently, the organizing principle of the socialist economic and social order must be, according to Chernov, *class neutral.* The corporations empowered to watch over the land that "belonged to the general property of the people" could therefore only be constructed with regard to territorial considerations. Following this argument of the "right to land," Chernov succeeded in coming to the conception of a pyramid of self-administering institutions as a model for the future society. Later he summarized his thoughts as follows: "The fundamental feature of the socialist revolutionary land program, the 'socialization of land' can therefore be ... characterized as the expansion of the great principle of self-administration to a new sector, the sector of the relationships in the countryside."[126]

By making the "right to land" the cornerstone of his interpretation of the socialization of land, and this with the approval of the majority of the party and almost all party economists,[127] Chernov blunted still further, compared to the drafts of 1902 and 1904, the socialist revolutionary agrarian program. This was the result of two

[124] So Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 27.
[125] See Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 159; Protokoly 1906, p. 228.
[126] See Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, p. 279f.
[127] See especially the cited works from Vikhliaev, S.S. Zak and Novotorzhskii in note 99 of this chapter.

accompanying effects of Chernov's innovation. First, the dimension of class struggle was practically eliminated because all members of the post-revolutionary society were to have the same claim to land. Second, the programmatic ideas of the PSR were made amenable to small property owners. No matter how sharply Chernov's theory pointed to categorical differences between regulation and disposition and between possession and property,[128] in reality the difference was thin and practically irrelevant since there was supposed to be an individual right to use land. A representative of the party's left wing, who probably was not a Maximalist, formulated his complaint sharply, but with good reason "that the minimal agrarian program approved at the first party congress introduces principles that are completely new if compared to the perspective developed in the columns of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*; that these principles contradict the socialist critique of the capitalist order; that, in the newest party literature, these principles have already begun to dull the revolutionary critique of bourgeois society."[129]

However, one must cite a fact that contradicts this charge of a "pacification" in the SR agrarian program: the delegates voted with rare unanimity against compensation payments for expropriated land. At most, they wanted to allow limited support for landowners during the period of transition to the new socialist economic order. It was only with the draft agrarian law of the last SR Minister of Agriculture in 1917 that violated the still valid party program by showing more readiness to accommodate the needs of landowners.[130]

In summarizing this debate, it is important to note that the PSR never succeeded in giving the demand for the socialization of land a concrete, practical meaning. Even more important was the PSRs inability to bring the party middle to agree upon a single, clearly defined interpretation of this essential part of their program. Despite a debate that had gone on for years, the middle was itself deeply confused as to what it understood by socialization of land. While some, such as the delegate from Moscow M.V. Vishniak, saw in nationalization an absolutely necessary prerequisite for the socialization of land, others (such as the "starik" O.S. Minor, a late-returning exile from Siberia) were convinced that socialization was the beginning of a long process that would lead to nationalization.[131] Especially unclear was the question concerning which institutions would dispose of the wealth of society after the revolutionary change of agrarian property relations. According to Chernov, "a pyramid of organs of self-administration" was to exist alongside the state and, together with

[128] See Chernov, K voprosu o sotsializatsii zemli, p. 28; Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, p. 279.

[129] See Firsov, Iakobii: K Peresmotru agrarnoi programmy i eia obosnovaniia, p. 22.

[130] See Protokoly 1906, pp. 201–202, pp. 249–252 and passim; also Chernov, K voprosu o vykupe zemli, (St. Petersburg, 1906). See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 250ff. In 1917 the PSR took a position that the "Legal Populists" took in 1905 (see Protokoly 1906, p. 90).

[131] See Protokoly 1906, p. 195 ("Pomortsev"), p. 203 and p. 223 ("Solomin").

the *obshchiny,* to administer the land.[132] Unfortunately, the socialist revolutionary literature does not explain how this concept was to be realized. The PSR argued for an extensive decentralization but at the same time it wanted to avoid being associated with anarchist anti-statism.[133] The party struck a balance by not giving a concrete formulation to its position.

The Conflict between Social Democracy and the PSR over an Agrarian Program

The heated controversy that, in the spring of 1902, put an abrupt end to the initially reserved relations between Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries soon influenced the attitude of both parties toward the peasant movement. Although this controversy was first sparked by the question of political terror (certainly an important tactical question), it was nevertheless the agrarian question that really divided Populists and Marxists. The agrarian question was the central specific problem of the Russian revolution.

Social Democratic peasant policy[134] was marked by a fundamental double strategy. They basically accepted Lenin's thesis of the capitalist penetration of agriculture and the resulting maxim for action, namely, "to clear the way for the free development of the class struggle in the countryside, the class struggle of the proletariat, which is directed at ... winning political power through the proletariat and the creation of the foundation for the socialist society." Social differentiation in the countryside was to be accelerated through the development of capitalist relations, and the class struggle was to be carried into the village. At the same time, Social Democracy was aware of the special conditions of tsarist Russia. As Lenin pointed out early, the Russian peasant not only had to suffer under capitalist conditions but also "no less ... under *pre-capitalist.*" The first task of SD agitation in agriculture was to eliminate serfdom.[135] Because the peasantry obviously had an existential interest in the elimination of serfdom, the basis for a limited alliance between the proletarian and the peasant movements was at hand. Peasant revolts were for the Russian Marxists "part of the democratic revolution in Russia" and represented in this capacity a force that "would not weaken but strengthen the capitalist development".[136] Lenin's resume of the second principle of SD agrarian policy was that, in

[132] See Chernov, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm, p. 279.

[133] See Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 140, in which he strongly rejected the statement of a Maximalist delegate: "We fear the state as much as we fear the devil."

[134] For the following see Geyer, Lenin, pp. 262–266, pp. 268–273. pp. 293–295 and passim; Meyer, Leninism, p. 123ff.; Trapeznikov, Agrarnyi vopros, Vol. I, p. 68ff.; Keep, Rise of Social Democracy, p. 81ff., p. 115f. and passim. For the Menshevist position see the brief account in: I. Getzler, Martov. A Political Biography of a Russian Social Democrat (Melbourne, 1967), p. 114.

[135] V.I. Lenin, Agrarnaia programma russkoi sotsial-demokratii (August 1902), in: CW, vol. 6, p. 347.

[136] Lenin, Peresmotr agrarnoi programmy rabochei partii (April 1906), in: CW, vol. 12, p. 242.

the interest of a quick bourgeois revolution, the proletariat has "every reason to give decisive support"[137] to the peasant revolution.

This ambivalent theoretical judgment corresponded to the catalogue of practical demands contained in the first agrarian program passed by the second RSDRP party congress in 1903. The program limited its demands to those which would put the peasantry in the position of sundering feudal ties and setting free the bourgeois-democratic content of their strivings. Among other things, the program demanded the termination of redemption payments that peasants were required to make for the land that they had previously worked for their masters; cancellation of the common tax liability of the *obshchina;* destruction of the remnants of feudal dependence; and, finally, free disposition of their land by the peasants. Because the SD concept of development saw in the land owned by former lords the driving thrust of capitalist methods of production in the countryside, Social Democrats could not agree to give all the land to peasants with little or no land of their own. Instead, the RSDRP demanded only the return of the "cut-offs" *(otrezki)* – those parcels of land that the peasants were compelled to give to the feudal masters at the time of emancipation.[138] According to Lenin, this demand demonstrated the "special character" of the SD program.[139]

Lenin also pointed out that this was the most "disputable" demand and, at the latest, the 1905 revolution made this fact plain for all to see. The violence of the agrarian unrest was badly underestimated, and consequently its position in the process of revolution was judged falsely. The elementary aggression of the peasant movement could not be channeled and controlled with the crumbs of the "cut-offs." Both factions in Social Democracy gradually became aware of the need to revise the old agrarian program. Among the suggestions for improvement, four different positions emerged.[140] These positions had a common ground, however, in that all guaranteed the peasantry, one way or the other, a substantial increase in their ownership of land. Thus, for the first time, social democratic tactics were receptive to the basic desires of the "muzhiki" for "black repartition." Promoters of the nationalization concept, whereby the state was to dispose of the land, did the same in a very moderate form. More promising was the much discussed project of P.P. Maslov, who proposed to transfer the land to regional organs of self-administration – that is,

[137] Lenin, Peresmotr agrarnoi programmy, in: CW, vol. 12, p. 243.

[138] See KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh Vol. I, p. 42f., as well as the outlines of this program in: V.I. Lenin, Rabochaia partiia i krest'ianstvo (1901), in: CW, vol. 4, pp. 429–37; Lenin, Proekt programmy nashei partii (1899), in: CW, vol. 4, pp. 211–39.

[139] Lenin, Agrarnaia programma russkoi sotsial-demokratii, in: CW, vol. 6, p. 323.

[140] Lenin, Peresmotr agrarnoi programmy, in: CW, vol. 12, p. 247ff.; Lenin, Agrarnaia programma sotsial-demokratii v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii 1905-1907 godov (1908), in: CW, vol. 16, p. 234ff.; Trapeznikov, Agramyi vopros, Vol. I, p. 130ff.

to "municipalize" the land.[141] Lenin made even more extensive concessions when he suggested the "immediate confiscation of the lands of the feudal estate owners" and the obligatory establishment of peasant committees. The agrarian programm of 1903 had already conceived of these peasant committees as the organs for the return of the "cut-offs."[142] Without question, it was this demand for revolutionary spontaneity that would give the peasantry the greatest room to maneuver. The fourth RSDRP party congress, held in Stockholm, approved in large part Lenin's realism and thereby confirmed the legitimacy of "peasant revolution."[143] Despite this flexibility in certain areas, Social Democracy did not budge from its fundamental theoretical judgment that the revolution of agrarian relations of land ownership would carry a mere bourgeois-democratic character.

From this rough sketch of the position of Russian Marxists, it is evident that their program and that of the SRs had, at least before the 1905 revolution, little in common. That which the PSR celebrated as the beginning of socialism appeared to the RSDRP as simply bourgeois nationalization and consequently was a treacherous promise. Lenin's polemic was tireless, insisting that "there is *not one grain of truth* in the claim that any kind of 'right to land' or 'an equalizing distribution of the land' or even the 'socialization of the land' was socialist."[144] For the "real contents" of that revolution which appears to the narodnik as 'socialization' would "result logically in opening the way for capitalism and in the decisive extermination of an economy of compulsory labor", and the "equalization" which the PSR regards as the elimination of the bourgeois character "would instead *express* the efforts of the most radical bourgeois strata".[145] Overlooking the immanent limitation of the peasant revolutionary movement appeared to Lenin as "idiocy" and "a petit-bourgeois reactionary utopia."[146] For Lenin the PSR had committed "fraud" by taking the socialization of the land into the agenda of its minimal demands and presenting these demands as "something that were within grasp." He considered such a perspective from the very beginning impossible, for a peasant revolt could not simply stop with changing agrarian property relations. Anticipating the objections of the Maximalist opposition in the PSR, Lenin argued that the peasant revolt would be the beginning "of

[141] See P.P. Maslov, Kritika agrarnykh programm i proekt programmy (Moscow, 1905), pp. 40–43.

[142] Lenin, Peresmotr agrarnoi programmy, in: CW, vol. 12, p. 267; also: Lenin, O nashei agrarnoi programme (pis'mo III s"ezdu, 29 [16] March 1905), in: CW, vol. 9, pp. 356–61.

[143] See Lenin, Agrarnaia programma sotsial-demokratii, in: CW, vol. 16, p. 234.

[144] Lenin, Politicheskie partii v Rossii (1912), in: CW, vol. 21, p. 284. See the same critique but coming from the Mensheviks: Martov, Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery i proletariat, p. 20ff., especially p. 22. Also: I.I. Shkiro, V.I. Lenin o sushchnosti uravnitel'nogo zemlepol'zovaniia (istoriograficheskii ocherk), in: Vestnik Leningradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta (cited: VLGU) 1971 Vyp. 8, pp. 5–13.

[145] Lenin, Agrarnaia programma sotsial-demokratii, in: CW, vol. 16, p. 214.

[146] Lenin, Agrarnaia programma sotsial-demokratii v russkoi revoliutsii. Avtoreferat (1908), in: CW, vol. 17, p. 150f.; Lenin, Melkoburzhuaznyi i proletarskii sotsializm (1905), in: CW, vol. 12, p. 48.

the elimination of private property altogether"[147] and the socialization of *all* means of production, i.e. put on the political agenda the socialist revolution of the proletariat. Thus the agrarian program of the Socialist Revolutionaries contained nothing but contradictions and errors. The socialist revolutionary program confused the socialization of the land with "bourgeois nationalization and the primitive peasant conception of the small-scale, balanced use of the land with the doctrine of modern socialism."[148]

The Socialist Revolutionaries did not hesitate to respond to such broadsides, especially because they had the advantage in this conflict. The hefty differences of opinion in the RSDRP made quite clear that the agrarian question was the Achilles' heel of SD theory and practice and so offered an inviting target for a counter offensive. The SR critique located, correctly, the cause of Social Democratic difficulties in the divide between the Marxist development model and Russian reality. Not without a certain satisfaction on the part of the socialist revolutionaries, the Russian students of Marx and Engels were accused of becoming hopelessly tied up in the bonds of their own theory, a theory that committed them to see, against all evidence to the contrary, *only* the proletariat as the carrier of the coming socialist revolution.[149] An unavoidable consequence of this dilemma was judged to be the SD demand for the return of the "cut-offs." This demand was a beloved object of derisive criticism. When *Iskra* accused the PSR of being petit-bourgeois, Rakitnikov responded with a warning to stone throwers who sit in glass houses. No matter how one organized the return of these parcels of land to the farmers, in every case this meant the "expansion of small peasant property owners."[150] A.I. Potapov supported Rakitnikov by claiming that such a demand was "artificial," "impractical," "heretical," and "utopian." Not only was it impossible to reconstruct the precise "cut-offs" forty years after the emancipation, it was also "naive" to believe that the dynamic of the peasant revolt would be held up "by any ancient pieces of land."[151] With the same scorn he turned

[147] Lenin, Revoliutsionnyi avantiurizm, in: CW, vol. 6, p. 396.

[148] Lenin, Revoliutsionnyi avantiurizm, in: CW, vol. 6, p. 397.

[149] See Maksimov [N.I. Rakitnikov], K kritike marksizma, in: VRR No. 4 (1905), pp. 345–385, here, p. 351.

[150] [N.I. Rakitnikov], Agrarnaia programma russkoi Sotsialdemokratii, in: RR No. 38 (15 December 1903), p. 4; also in Sbornik statei Antonova et.al. (Moscow, 1908), pp. 206–221; See also [Rakitnikov], Sotsial-demokraty i Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery, in: RR No. 16 (15 January 1903), pp. 1–5, also in: Sbornik statei Antonova et.al., pp. 191–204.

[151] See A. Rudin [A.I. Potapov], K krest'ianskomu voprosu. (Obzor tekushchei literatury), in: VRR No. 3 (March 1903), pp. 199–225, here p. 210, p. 214. Further: N. Krupov [Potapov], Po povodu odnoi broshiury. (N. Lenin, Zadachi russkikh sotsialdemokratov, izd. 2-oe 1902g.), in: VRR No. 3 (March 1903), pp. 279–300; A. Rudin [Potapov], Chto govoriat russkie sotsial-demokraty o 'derevenskoi bednote'? (Ikh teoriia i agrarno-polemicheskie uprazhneniia (no publisher, no date); [L.E. Shishko], Kak smotriat Sotsialisty-revoliutsionery i Sotsial-demokraty na krest'ianskii vopros, in: Sbornik statei Antonova et.al., pp. 260–266.

the argument used by Lenin to mock the socialization of the land against its originator. Potapov concluded his review of SD literature on the agrarian question by maintaining that this question remained a "noli me tangere" for Russian Marxists and that their program was an "artificial construction of the book worms from *Iskra* and *Zaria*. These men extended their hands to the 'petit-bourgeois' and gave the impression that they were serving the great [bourgeoisie] and the intensification of class war, while at the same time trying to liquidate the distribution of land by means of a democratic revision" of the agrarian reform of 1861.[152] In the theoretical world of the Socialist Revolutionaries, there was hardly a more fatal political error, hardly a more unbelievable theoretical mistake thinkable than to follow the SD plan and leave the natural pioneer of socialism (viz., the Russian peasantry) to the poverty of a capitalist development and the horror of original accumulation.[153]

The modification of the agrarian program of the RSDRP after 1905 could not change the PSRs negative attitude on this issue. Potapov commented on the discussion during the Stockholm party council by claiming that, "the majority of Russian Social Democrats" argue only "for the elimination of *large* private landowners," but they want to "leave the small landowning bourgeois in peace."[154] Maslov's municipalization concept was rejected even though it propagated the equal division of land in practically the same form as the PSR. The controversy soon degenerated into a rigid, ritualistic, and endless polemic in which both sides reviled each other with the same invectives. When Lenin became angry at the PSRs petit-bourgeois "lack of ideas and principles,"[155] Rakitnikov raised his voice against the "bourgeois original sin" of Social Democracy by insisting that, under Russian conditions, it would "unavoidably decay into the middle-class."[156]

2.4.2. Minimal and Maximal Programs

In the spring of 1903, a narrower circle of the Socialist Revolutionary leadership in exile around the editorial board of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* began deliberations over the party program. Two alternative drafts were presented. The first was written by Rakitnikov and carried the transparent stamp of Marxist beliefs. Rakitnikov's Marxism was certainly of a highly individual sort. To use Chernov's words, Rakitnikov oriented himself on the Marx of the "Communist Manifesto" and consequently his

[152] Rudin, K krest'ianskomu voprosu, p. 217.

[153] See especially Maksimov, K kritike marksizma, p. 350ff.

[154] A. Rudin [A.I. Potapov], Na tu zhe temu. (Eshche ob agrarnykh ekskursiiakh Rossiiskikh Sotsial-demokratov). (Moscow, 1906), p. 31.

[155] Lenin, Revoliutsionnyi avantiurizm, in: CW, vol. 6, p. 397.

[156] [N.I. Rakitnikov], Agrarnaia programma russkoi sotsialdemokratii, in: Sbornik statei Antonova, p. 220.

draft had a Maximalist tendency. Chernov was the author of the second draft. His was committed to a "dynamic sociology" and an "integralism," which were the products of an attempt to combine Mikhailovskii's and Lavrov's subjective social philosophy with Marxist theorems. Both positions appeared to agree, more or less, on the question of the "socialization of the land." But it was the proposal for a separation between the minimal and maximal programs that set off long and hefty debates.[157]

As already noted, Chernov had very early maintained that every revolutionary party must present two different catalogues of demands. One catalogue must give the long-term objectives that the revolutionaries intend to realize after the fall of the "ancien regime." The second must define the short-term objectives, i.e. the "totality ...of all measures that will be useful to the working class and its struggle for socialism under the condition that political power is in the hands of the bourgeois."[158] Such a separation between a minimal and maximal program should not be equated with the difference between legalism or reformism and manifest revolutionary action: the demands of the minimal program (the best example being socialization of the land) also tended to violate the bourgeois order. Thus Chernov preferred to speak of the PSRs "revolutionary minimal program" and sharply differentiated this program from that of the Social Democrats. He accused the Social Democratic program of reformist harmlessness and pacificism.

Most of the participants in the deliberations over a party program[159] preferred Chernov's draft. But Rakitnikov had his supporters and so a compromise was necessary. Even though this new platform was worked out in endless discussions and with great effort, it was strongly criticized from all sides. It was even announced that counter-proposals were being prepared in St. Petersburg and by the exiles in Paris associated with Rubanovich. But as the counter-proposals were not presented by the end of the year, the editorial board of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* (consisting of Gots, Chernov, and Shishko) decided to rework the compromise draft and publish it on their own responsibility. Whether this procedure (later dubbed by Chernov as an "extraordinary measure") was, despite the euphemistic formulation, a coup against an unwanted opposition must remain an open question. What is clear, however, is that the published draft program was purified of all traces of Rakit-

[157] See the only report that I know of over the development of the party program by: V. Chernov, Proekt novoi partiinoi programmy. Stat'ia pervaia, in: RR No. 33–34 (January–February 1924), p. 14. A brief account is also in: Pokazaniia Sletova, ZP No. 4432 f. 1.

[158] Protokoly 1906, p. 261, also p. 254ff.; further: [V.N. Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. Programma-maksimum i programma minimum, in: RR No. 41 (15 February 1904), p. 6.

[159] Aside from Chernov, Gots, Gershuni and Rakitnikov these include the other members of the narrow circle of the leadership of the PSR abroad: Sletov, Potapov and Minor. See Chernov, Proekt novoi partiinoi programmy, p. 14.

nikov's maximalism and reformulated so as to closely follow Chernov's original proposal.[160]

By approving the *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* draft with only minor corrections, the first PSR party congress accepted at the same time the controversial minimal program. The demands contained in the approved party program were thus not much different from those found in other revolutionary and opposition parties. For example, the PSR made the following demands:

1. "guaranteed personal and civil rights," such as the freedom of conscience, speech, press, the freedom to hold meetings, to make coalitions and the freedom of trade, the complete freedom of movement and the right to strike as well as the recognition of the security and right to privacy of the individual; 2. the right to vote in general, free, equal, and secret elections for all citizens over the age of twenty; 3. the convocation of a constituant assembly for the purpose of creating "a democratic republic constituted on the basis of these principles, with a large measure of self-administration for the provinces and the urban and agrarian municipalities," i.e. the largest possible de-centralization; 4. the utmost federalism in the relations between the nationalities[161] and equal rights as well as equal representation of each

[160] See Chernov, Proekt novoi programmy, p. 14. Chernov later said that it was most unfortunate for future historians that the original "monolithic" competing platforms as well as the compromise draft were lost. Judging by the evidence currently at hand, this seems to be the case regarding the "monolithic" platforms. As for the compromise draft by Chernov and Rakitnikov, it might be identical with a program project from Saratov. This Saratov program was apparently not intended to be published and is to be found in the PSR Archive No. 829 and in the Nicolaevsky Collection No. 7, No. 1. Support for this view can be derived, above all, from the distinctly Marxist terminology of the introduction. This introduction examines the peculiarities of capitalist development in Russia in more detail than the later approved party program and so tends to a materialist view of history. Further, the Saratov project raises the unmistakably Maximalist demand for the socialization of industry and even counts this among the "next tasks." It is possible to see in this demand a tribute to Rakitnikov's position, although, to be sure, one must not overlook the concessions to the majority faction in the socialist revolutionary leadership. Above all we must consider that, regardless of its long-term objectives, this platform differentiated between a minimal and a maximal program. It is this mixture of contradictory elements that allows us to see the Saratov project as a compromise. It would be a mistake to hold another draft program in the PSR Archive No. 829 as the missing compromise paper and this despite the heading "Gots, Gershuni, Maksimov (Rakitnikov, M.H.), Chernov." This paper has almost exactly the same wording as the published draft written by Chernov and approved by the editorial board of "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia" as well as the final version of the program which the founding party congress of the PSR accepted. When Rakitnikov is listed as co-author then this is more than likely due to his recognizing the impossibility that his own draft would ever carry the day. In any case, Rakitnikov was not convinced by Chernov's draft and he subjected it to hefty criticism in the party discussions.

[161] There was protest in the party against such demands for federalism. The delegate of the Moscow committee and future mayor of Moscow in 1917 V.V. Rudnev ("Roshchin") expressed these objections in an extreme form when he, for example, denied Finland and Poland the right to self-determination (See Protokoly 1906, p. 171f). Such positions anticipated much of the great Russian nationalism which dominated the PSR's nationalities policies eleven years later (See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 37ff.). For the attitude of the early PSR in this fundamental question see [V.M. Chernov], Natsional'nyi vo-

nationality in provinces with a mixed population; 5. separation of church and state; 6. abolition of the standing army and the establishment of a people's militia.

The PSR's economic minimal catalogue contained, next to the demand for the socialization of the land, also the entire socialist revolutionary worker's program. *Inter alia,* this program demanded:
progressive taxes and the elimination of "all taxes that burden the working masses"; laws for the protection of the workers, social security and unemployment insurance; the introduction of the eight-hour workday, the establishment of a minimum wage, and the participation of trade unions "on the setting of working conditions in the factories;" "development of public services and enterprises of all kinds" in communities and municipalities; the progressive socialization of firms so long as it can be guaranteed that the dependence of the workers on the bureaucracy will not be increased.[162]

A large majority of delegates to the first party congress believed that the peasant and workers programs were in a harmonious "equilibrium" because both programs guaranteed the "right to work." The peasant program socialized the land, and the workers program established a minimum wage and an insurance protection plan.[163] However, despite the appearance of harmony, this analogy revealed how deficient the alleged balance between the two programs actually was. While the agrarian program secured for the peasant de facto the right to dispose of his most important means of production, the land, the worker received only an absolute, not even a relative, fixing of his wages. And when exploitation in agriculture was already to be totally abolished by the elimination of private property and the transition to a socialist order, in industry there was only to be a social security net and the capitalist form of production was to remain untouched. The elimination of the capitalist form of production, the so-called "socialization of the factories and enterprises," was declared to be the center of the *maximal* program.[164] Because this demand for the socialization of the factories was not precisely formulated and not taken into the final official party program, it is clear that the delegates understood this to be a task for the distant future.[165]

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pros i revoliutsiia, in: RR No. 35 (1 November 1903), pp. 1–3, also in: Sbornik statei Antonova, pp. 307–316.

[162] See Protokoly 1906, p. 361; Citation from the German translation of the program in: Bericht der Sozialrevolutionären Partei 1907, p. 30ff. For the discussion over the workers program see Protokoly 1906, p. 253ff.

[163] So Chemov, supported by Rakitnikov, in: Protokoly 1906, p. 230.

[164] See Protokoly 1906, p. 101f.; p. 158 and passim.

[165] For the Saratov project the "next task" to accomplish after the fall of the autocracy and the assumption of power by the socialist parties was "the complete democratization of the entire social structure", in which the new order was to "guarantee": "a free people's government and the transformation of the state from an instrument of class domination and repression into a simple serving organ of

Not all delegates of the founding congress approved the distinction between minimal and maximal measures in Chernov's draft program. In fact, the debates over the appropriateness of an immediate socialization of industry were no less vigorous than those over the concrete meaning of socialization of the land.[166] This time the opposition was alone in the Maximalist camp,[167] but it was divided into two clearly defined schools. As always, Rakitnikov held fast to his old position and represented a moderate "abstract-theoretical, practically harmless Maximalism which lived on in the heads of two or three people inside the party."[168] He was supported by his comrade of many years from the PSR's Saratov committee, A.I. Al'tovskii.[169] A *radical* left-populist position was taken by Ginzburg, the delegate from Vitebsk. He did not speak often, however, and had no influence among the delegates.

Ginzburg's arguments were rather rough, as he made a simple analogy between the agrarian and the industrial sectors. Given that the PSR's platform demanding the expropriation of land had brought the party much sympathy, it appeared to Ginzburg to be a lack of courage, as conciliation and cowardice if the party did not at the same time demand the socialization of industry. In his opinion such tame measures as an eight-hour day and social security laws in no way threatened the exploitive capitalist order. According to Ginzburg, the foundation of the system could only be shaken by one measure: "expand the principle of the revolution into the city and, parallel to the revolutionary expropriation of land, ... force the revolutionary expropriation of the factories and enterprises with the replacement of private property through the collective-social property."[170]

Rakitnikov formulated a related argument but with more sense and without the radical language of Maximalist jargon. He recalled the topos of populist theory that, as a consequence of Russia's economic and cultural backwardness, the Russian revolution could not be a bourgeois revolution. Hence there was no exact criteria for differentiating between demands that would not exceed the bounds of the existing social order and those that would exceed these bounds, i.e. one could not differenti-

society; the nationalization (sic!) of the land; the transition of those sectors of economy which have been prepared by the preceding process of capitalist production into the direct administration of the central state organs and the organs of local self-administration; the transfer of other large enterprises to the authority of workers associations according to certain lawfully regulated conditions (for example the prohibition of wage labor); the transfer of land by the organs of local self-administration to cooperatives of workers on the basis of equality for all, or, when this is not possible, to individuals who work the land with their own labor; the abolition of the right of inheritance to goods which are worth more than a certain norm, etc." See Proekt (ne podlezhit oglasheniiu), PSR Archive 829, p. 5.

[166] See Protokoly 1906, p. 79ff. and p. 253ff.

[167] In this question the "Legal Populists" largely shared the point of view of the party majority and the party leadership around Chernov.

[168] S.R. Krainii [V.M. Chernov], Sotsializatsiia zemli, kak takticheskaia problema, p. 166.

[169] Pseudonym was probably "Goretskii" although we cannot be entirely sure.

[170] Protokoly 1906, pp. 105–107, citation p. 107.

ate between the minimal and maximal program. The maxim of revolutionary action could only be to do everything "that brings us closer to socialism." Rakitnikov concluded: "The revolutionary program for the realization of the socialist ideals must be held within the limits set at this time by socio-economic conditions (especially the development stage of the forces of production)."[171] He felt all the more compelled to emphasize these matters as the revolutionary movement suffered its first defeats in the revolts of December 1905. Rakitnikov warned that the present moment offered perhaps the last chance to realize the dream of Russian socialists since Herzen and to bring Russia away from the ruinous development path of western capitalism. Al'tovskii supported Rakitnikov by noting that the socialist transformation could not be limited to one sector of society and that it would jump over to the industrial sector. In Al'tovskii's eyes, the occupation of the factories was proof of his position.[172]

In the name of the majority of the party leadership and the delegates, Chernov sharply rejected the arguments of both Maximalist factions. He accused the left deviationists of holding to a dangerous utopianism. His prophecy that the occupied factories would have a very short existence proved correct, and he energetically pointed out that the socialization of industry – with all of its complex accompanying effects such as the elimination of the market and the reorganization of distribution[173] – would be a "fantastic task." Above all, Chernov objected to the banal analogy between the socialization of land and the socialization of the factories, arguing that the socialization of agrarian land essentially corresponded in his view to the same socialization of land in the cities.[174]

It was no accident that Chernov had no answer to Rakitnikov's thesis that under Russian conditions a separation between the "bourgeois" minimal and the socialist maximal program was impossible. Rakitnikov had the logic of populism on his side. Within the bounds of a strict subjective social philosophy that rejected the existence of objective historical laws, it was surely senseless to fix future stages of development and thereby, *a priori,* limit the party's freedom of action. The distinction between a minimal and a maximal program had its place not in the populist but in the social democratic theory of revolution, for there it was bound with the expectation of a bourgeois revolution. The realist Chernov embraced this concept because he accepted the view that the progress of capitalist development also made the bourgeois transitory stage necessary for the Russian revolution. Blinded by their belief in the spontaneous power of the "working people," Maximalists of both schools de-

[171] Protokoly 1906, p. 114.

[172] See Protokoly 1906, pp. 116–117.

[173] See Protokoly 1906, p. 146ff., citation p. 155.

[174] Protokoly 1906, p. 149; See also: Programmnye voprosy. Sotsializatsiia zemli i programma-minimum, in:: RR No. 42 (1 March 1904), pp. 3–4.

nied this necessity. But just because of this belief they were, in a certain sense, the more orthodox and consistent Populists. There can be no doubt that their objections were correct that the concept of a revolutionary minimal program contained self-contradictory elements.[175] And they correctly pointed out that the conviction of the socialist revolutionary majority faction that the socialization of the land could be organized within the bounds of a capitalist order and that a socialist sector could exist next to a capitalist sector in one and the same society was utopian and divorced from reality.

2.5. Summary: The "Synthetic Point Of View" and the Modernization of Russia

Although the PSR had been a full member of the Second Socialist International since the Amsterdam Congress in 1904, it nevertheless remained an outsider in this community. On the one hand, the PSR was forced into this role by the SD parties. On the other hand, the PSR preserved its own sense of otherness and the peculiarity of its theoretical and programmatic principles. Chernov explained to the delegates of the founding party congress that, unlike the Social Democrats, the PSR does not stand "on the traditional dogmas of Marxism,"[176] but rather felt beholden to a "sociological school" that honored "next to the names of Marx and Engels the names of Lavrov and Mikhailovskii as well." The PSR wanted to tie together "*two* moments" in "an unbreakable bond": "the genetic, spontaneous progress of events *and* the directed, conscious action of organized and social forces," the subjective *and* the objective factors of the historical process, "the consciousness *and* the will." Socialist revolutionary theory thus held its distance to both one-sided extremes, to the "historical intellectualism" that ignored "spontaneous processes," as well as to the historical materialism that sought "to force everything into the logic of a spontaneous evolution".[177] The party did learn from Marx, but it accepted only that which "was satisfactory, ... was revolutionary".[178] The PSR had resolved the contradiction between materialism and idealism into a "synthetic point of view".[179]

Chernov explained what he meant by this formula in the theoretical part of his draft program. He intentionally did not use the concept of the "the development of productive forces" as the basis of his argument. Instead, he worked from a "wider,

[175] See this critique by Firsov, Iakobii: K peresmotru agrarnoi programmy, p. 102.
[176] Protokoly 1906, p. 81.
[177] Protokoly 1906, pp. 83–84.
[178] Pro domo sua. (Bibliograficheskaia zametka o No 1 "V.R.R." v "Zare" No. 2-3), in: VRR No. 2 (February 1902) otdel III, pp. 99–104, here p. 103.
[179] Protokoly 1906, p. 132.

more general sociological and not simply an economic" concept, a concept that included the "growth of the dominance of humanity over nature," and technological progress as well as the "moral, subjective" aspect of social evolution. Thus the idea of the "comprehensive harmonious development of the human individual"[180] was made the theoretical thread which was to hold the program together.

What Chernov held to be the achievement of SR theory was attacked by inner-party critics from the left and the right as a fundamental weakness. In their eyes, "synthesis" was only an euphemism for eclecticism. Certainly the critics of the left and the right came to this judgment on the basis of very different considerations. For the People's Socialists, the cardinal sin was the extensive borrowing from Marxism. They also complained that Chernov over-emphasized the role of economic factors in history and had thereby turned away from populist tradition. In addition, like the Social Democrats, he tended to limit the supporting forces of the socialist movement to the "working class." But this class was not identical with the "people."[181] The SR left, for their part, criticized the lack of consistency. Rakitnikov pointed out that the program should have proceeded from a "federative socialism" and then demonstrated the importance of this type of socialism for Russia. In his judgment, Chernov's program should have been based on the idea of backwardness.[182] Chernov could have chosen between two alternatives. Either he could have accepted the "general views" about the peasantry (i.e. the Marxist thesis of the tendency of the agrarian sector to be integrated into capitalist market relations), or he could have scripted "the program in a completely different way." Because he did not choose one or the other alternative, the agrarian program was "rather disjointed" and disconnected.[183] In other words, because Chernov did not want to accept the exclusivity of either a purely Marxist or a purely populist approach and at the same time tried to combine both approaches, he succeeded in the praiseworthy task of giving "every party worker" the possibility of understanding the project in his own way,[184] but such openness was achieved at the price of incoherence and lack of concreteness.

What the critics did not recognize was that Chernov had every reason not to bend to the dictates of the alternatives that were placed before him. When we look closer

[180] Protokoly 1906, p. 132f.; cited from: Bericht der Sozialrevolutionären Partei 1907, p. 24.

[181] Protokoly 1906, p. 87.

[182] See Protokoly 1906, p. 109ff.

[183] See a commentary to Chernov's draft program in the PSR Archive 829. Two obviously Maximalist critics from Tambov put forward similar arguments: Zametka k proektu programmy; Proekt programmy, Tambov, 1904. PSR Archive 541.

[184] So O.S. Minor, Protokoly 1906, p. 203 as well as a commentary to Chernov's draft program from Moscow which recommended precisely the "Eclecticism" and "lack of clarity" as fundamentals of the program because one could "not deny, that the points of view of many believers in the socialist doctrine, who the PSR wants to win and keep as supporters, are not only different, but also ... incompatible." See Dlia Viktora. PSR Archive 829.

at the problem of the "synthetic" character of the PSRs theory and program in relation with Russian development at the turn of the century, we will see in this problem an expression of the fundamental challenge that confronted the PSR from the very beginning. The PSR was compelled to accommodate populist political theory and tactics to the socio-economic and political changes occurring in Russia as a consequence of capitalist industrialization and its accompanying effects. No matter how one wishes to measure the degree of change, there can be no doubt that the conditions for political action at the beginning of the new century were substantially different from those of the 1870s and 1880s. New circumstances compelled neo-populist theory to reformulate the justification for political terror and to come closer to the SD belief in the necessity of a bourgeois revolution to precede a socialist revolution in Russia. The concrete utopia of a direct transition from a pre-capitalist agrarian state had decayed to an anachronist mirage. Russia's socio-economic and political condition at the turn of the century increasingly undermined the foundation of populist theory and the practical forms of action of populist politics. Chernov took this all into account by trying to combine Populism, the theory of a pre-capitalist agrarian society, with Marxism, the theory of capitalist society. The concept of synthesis best describes the basic element of SR thought, especially because of its doubled connotation of productive synopsis and simple addition. But inner-party criticism from the left and the right hit the bulls-eye just because of Chernov's attempt to combine Marxism and Populism. Lenin, whose talent for sharp analysis of reality no one is likely to deny, described correctly the dilemma of Neo-Populism, when he commented: "Russia's entire socio-economic development, the entire course of the Russian revolution ruthlessly and pitilessly pulls the rug out from under the feet of the pure narodnik-ideology, consequently the beliefs of the Socialist Revolutionaries must become eclectic."[185]

And not only that. Especially the demand for the socialization of land, the program's heart, demonstrated that the adjustment to changed conditions remained insufficient – and perhaps could not be pushed further without jeopardizing the very substance of populist heritage. For no matter how one judges the vitality of the *obshchina,* there can be no doubt that the socialization concept had increasingly come to lose contact with reality. To want to build the new state on the basis of agrarian communes meant practically working against an economic development already in progress. As P.A. Vikhliaev commented, the factory worker "could only realize his desire for land" if he wished "to exchange industrial work for agricultural work,"[186]

[185] Lenin, Sotsializm i krest'ianstvo (1905), in: CW, vol. 11, p. 285. Similar also Lenin, Ot narodnichestva k marksizmu (1905), in: CW, vol. 9, pp. 190–197; Lenin, Eserovskie men'sheviki (1906), in: CW, vol. 13, pp. 396–406.

[186] Citation from Firsov, Iakobii: K peresmotru agrarnoi programmy, p. 157.

and this meant that, in the end, the socialist revolutionary agrarian program would lead to a re-agrarianization of Russia. The PSR's program was based on the backward looking utopia of an overwhelmingly agrarian state, on the myth of an original democracy of producers as embodied in the commune.

CHAPTER 3

The Construction of a Party Organization and the Beginnings of Socialist Revolutionary Agitation in Russia (1902–1905)

When the PSR was born in the winter of 1901/02, the party suffered not only from insufficient theoretical unity but also from unsatisfactory organizational coherence. The party existed at first only in the heads of a few activists and in their personal relationships.[1] Only in the following years was the party successful in binding the already existing socialist revolutionary groups closer together, in building a network of local strong points, and thus giving the formal decision of its foundation a real basis.

Along with the other Russian revolutionary parties, the PSR had to solve three problems. First, the party had to work illegally and engage in a constant war with the Okhrana. In this regard, we must ask the question of the degree to which the pres-

[1] It was especially Menshevik commentators who emphasized that the PSR was founded by means of a forceful unification of many heterogeneous groups "from above" as opposed to the RSDRP, which was unified in a democratic way "from below." Although this thesis does make a good point, it underestimates the independent neo-populist movements at the grassroots. See T. Dan, The Origins of Bolshevism. Ed and trans. from the Russian by J. Carmichael (Kingswood/Surrey, 1964), p. 267; Maslov, Narodnicheskie Partii, p. 96ff.

sures of conspiracy formed the party organization. Did the compulsion to conspiracy lead in a similar way to an "ultra-centralized" and undemocratic party structure that was to be found, according to a popular interpretation, with the Bolsheviks?[2] Second, the PSR had to find the means to overcome the old divide between the intelligentsia and the masses, a divide that had led to the failure of populist movements of the 1870s. This problem put the PSR in an especially difficult situation. The party wanted to gather not only the urban proletariat, but above all the peasantry. However, the structural barriers to political participation in backward agrarian societies and other difficult conditions peculiar to Russia made an organizational integration of the peasantry almost impossible.[3] Third, despite repression from the state and extremely limited channels of communication, the PSR had to secure and maintain regular exchanges between Russia and the exiles and between the party periphery and the center. Our task is to see if the divide separating the socialist revolutionary exiles from the party workers in Russia and in general the division of the "conscious" elite from the "dark" masses was reduced or enlarged by the structure of a party organization. Did a flexible organization promote inner-party mobility or did a rigid hierarchy hinder a significant fluctuation between the different party levels?

3.1. Territorial Expansion of Socialist Revolutionary Groups in Russia

Student unrest in 1899 marked the beginning of a new phase in the extensive political mobilization of the population. Carried along by a wave of increasing unrest and dissatisfaction, the PSR was able to increase rapidly the number of its bases of support. The PSR's efforts were all the more successful because the founding of the party had polarized the revolutionary scene in Russia and so forced all political groups to organize themselves. Any attempts to preserve an independent existence had to fail sooner or later. As Sletov stated in his report on the activities of the Central Committee, as early as May 1903 the affiliation of every political circle "to the left of orthodox Social Democracy" to the only "crystallization point" in this camp, namely the PSR, was completed and the structure of a party organization was established.[4]

[2] See Keep, Rise of Social Democracy, p. 94; Geyer, Lenin, p. 345. Lenin himself referred to this situation. He saw in the elimination of the old "journeyman work methods" and the creation of a disciplined party composed of cadres of professional revolutionaries, who were to be "no less skilled" than the Okhrana, the essential prerequisite for the victory against autocracy. See V.I. Lenin, Chto delat'? (1902), in: PSS, vol. 6, pp. 1–192, here, p. 125f.

[3] See below chapter 7 on page 199ff.

[4] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. prochitannyi na 2-om s"ezde Z.O. P.S.-R. v iiule 1904 g. ot imeni Ts.K. P.S.-R., sostavlen St. N.S-vym [S.N. Sletov], PSR Archive 514. The only

According to Sletov, whose information is confirmed by other sources, by this time the PSR had established itself in all the cities where neo-populist circles had existed in the 1890s. Nevertheless, the party's growth really began only in the following years of 1903–1904, when the number of socialist revolutionary local organizations doubled to nearly forty. Not only was the party successful in expanding the net of so-called "groups" (i.e., loose associations of socialist revolutionary sympathizers who, for the most part, only engaged in "quiet" propaganda), but it was also able to found relatively solid and well-organized committees. These committees conducted agitation in factories and made themselves known to the public through flyers and brochures. An especially important step was the increase in the party's printing presses, which rose from four in 1902 to ten in 1903.[5] According to the report of the activities of the Central Committee in May 1903, the PSR had committees in St. Petersburg, Kiev, Odessa, Khar'kov, Saratov, Ekaterinoslav, Volhynia, Voronezh, Penza, Smolensk, and Nizhnii-Novgorod, together with "groups" in Tula, Poltava, and Moscow. By July 1904 the PSR could count new committees in Tambov, Briansk, Nikolaev, and Kherson as well as "groups" in Belostok, Vitebsk, Berdichev, Astrakhan', Tver', Chernigov, Gomel', Vil'na, Minsk, Kursk, Samara, Baku, Sevastopol', Kazan', Kaluga, and some other less important places.[6] By the end of 1904, the neo-populist party had expanded its zone of influence to all regions of European Russia, the sole exceptions being the Baltics, Poland, Finland, and the Caucasus.

Nevertheless this process did not proceed at a constant pace, nor was it uniformly successful. Not surprisingly, the strength of the PSR was first consolidated in its region of core support – the "cultural centers of southern and southeastern Russia,"

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two attempts at cooperation worthy of mention between the RSDRP and the PSR fell victim to this polarization: the "Union of the Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats in the Urals", which despite its relative distance from the center of politics and the special conditions of the Urals only lasted for about one year, and the "United Group of Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats from Saratov", which tended so strongly to the PSR, that the "Iskra" gave up on it and subjected this group to hefty attacks. See Ural'skii ob"edinennyi soiuz S.R. i S.D.: Programma Ural'skogo Soiuza Sotsialdemokratov i Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, 1901 god, Arkhiv PSR No. 474; Golos Truda No. 1 and 2. Izd.: Saratovskaia ob"edinennaia gruppa Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov i Sotsial-demokratov, PSR Archive 521/I. Also: Iskra No. 21 (1 June 1902), p. 8.

[5] See the Okhrana weekly report No. 7 from 11 November 1902, p. 4, OA XIII c (2) f. 1; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 113.

[6] See Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg., PSR Archive 514; also the first report of the activities of the Central Committee read by E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia before the founding conference of the ZO in August 1903: Zasedaniia uchreditel'nogo s"ezda Zagranichnoi Organizatsii P.S.-R., 15. avg. 1903 g., PSR Archive 125. Further information on the development of the socialist revolutionary organization can be found in: Sletov, Ocherki, p. 45; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 62, 66, 93; Okhrana Report No. 7 from 11 November 1902, OA XIII c (2) f. 1, p. 1f.; Rapport 1904, p. 34f.

that is, Kiev, Khar'kov, Saratov, and Voronezh[7] and from there expanded southward to Ekaterinoslav, Odessa, Zhitomir, and Penza. Only later could the party implant roots in Russia's north. Azef was sent to St. Petersburg in the summer of 1902 with the task of establishing a center for the distribution of illegal socialist revolutionary literature being smuggled into Russia. He also succeeded in founding workers' circles and in finally making St. Petersburg once again a center of SR agitation.[8] Certainly, the praise that Azef's success received in Breshkovskaia's Central Committee report has a bitter after-taste in light of Azef's later unmasking as a police spy. St. Petersburg was particularly prominent in supplying the provinces of Novgorod and Pskov with brochures, and it also made contact with Kostroma, Kazan', Simbirsk, Vladimir, and Nizhnii-Novgorod. "One of the most outstanding Socialist Revolutionaries" of this early period was the populist veteran Panev, who played an important role in PSR activities in St. Petersburg.

With support coming from St. Petersburg, socialist revolutionary work in Moscow also began to become more active in the winter of 1902–1903. Unfortunately, the level of activity was so low that, in August 1903, Breshkovskaia could only hope that Moscow would "finally enter the circle of the active groups" of the party.[9] Even the PSR felt the need to explain why this only occurred with the founding of a committee in February 1904. Some pointed to the activity of police chief Zubatov and the trade unions he directed. Others emphasized the special position of Moscow's proletariat, which was very strongly bound to the village and, therefore, seemed not to be as "developed" as the working class in St. Petersburg, for example.[10] The growth of the socialist revolutionary organization was not only "significantly slower" in Moscow than in the south, but also, as Sletov stated, in the central industrial area and in north Russia as a whole. Working from the Ukraine, the PSR only succeeded in gaining a foothold in White Russia in the course of 1903 by establishing groups in Smolensk, Briansk, Vitebsk, and Belostok.[11]

Despite such delays, one can certainly agree with Gershuni in describing the organizational growth of the PSR as "simply astounding." The Okhrana came to the same conclusion.[12] Gershuni and the Okhrana both confirmed the phenomenon that this SR advance came at the expense of Social Democracy. The heightening of

[7] See Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514.

[8] See M.O. Levin, Moi vospominaniia ob Azefe, NC No. 7 No. 104, p. 10ff.

[9] See Breshkovskaia's report on the activities of the Central Committee in: Zasedaniia uchreditel'nogo s"ezda Zagranichnoi Organizatsii, PSR Archive 125.

[10] Ocherk rabot v Tsentral'noj Oblasti, Archive PSR 676.

[11] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514.

[12] Letter by Gershuni to the editorial board of "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia" [end of February 1903], PSR Archive 502/4; also in NC No. 7, No. 95. Okhrana Weekly Report No. 7 from 11 November 1902, p. 1, OA XIII c (2) f. 1.

terrorist fever was also a strong indicator of this phenomenon. Gershuni wrote that, especially in the south, there was a "mass flight" from SD organizations to the PSR. No one asked for *Iskra* any more; rather, it was the SR *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* that was much more in demand. And workers were reported to be making comments like this: "At the moment the government does not concern itself with the Social Democrats, ... but it does fear the Socialist Revolutionaries as real revolutionaries. Look, they are all thrown into prison." Therefore, the police paid 1,000 rubles to secure the treason of one member in the SR's Fighting Organization, 100 rubles for an SR *intelligent*, 25 rubles for an SR worker – but at most just 3 rubles for an SD worker. Gershuni went so far as to claim that Social Democracy had come to fear the PSR more than the autocratic state.[13] Similar, if somewhat more sober, was the judgment offered by an internal Okhrana weekly report on the situation, which confirmed that "many serious Social Democrats" are switching allegiance to the PSR.[14]

3.2. The Center in Russia

It is difficult to investigate the structure and methods of the SR organization in Russia. That situation is, above all, due to the obvious inability of the PSR to establish stable lines of communication or even orderly activities between the local groups. From the very beginning, the Okhrana was highly successful in crippling important party centers and discovering important printing presses. Although Tsarism was unable to prevent the formation of a network of local SR cells, it could nevertheless seriously disturb the party's activities and periodically paralyze local organizations, if only temporarily. The regime's successes were reflected not only in the fact that the PSR was forced to put off its founding party congress until 1905 but also in the fact that the party never succeeded in establishing a permanent central authority in Russia. The direction of the party organization changed according to the presence of qualified revolutionaries and favorable working conditions. Accordingly, the coordination of the party's action was inadequate. The construction of a party organization did not follow a plan but instead was a chain of improvisations and ad hoc regulations. What Sletov wrote in reference to 1902 was essentially true for the entire pre-revolutionary period: "Strictly speaking there was no organization. There was simply a group of people who had contacts based on their personal acquaintance and who had no specified rights or duties."[15] It was thus impossible even to think about holding regular elections for party offices. The Okhrana did not give sufficient room

[13] Letter by Gershuni to the first ASL Congress from July 1902, PSR Archive 502/1.
[14] Okhrana weekly report No. 7 from 11 November 1902, p. 5 OA XIII c (2) f. 1.
[15] Iz pokazaniia Sletova 22-go aprelia 1910 g., ZP No. 4432 f. 1, p. 3.

to allow the party to observe democratic principles. Only the procedure of informal co-optation was appropriate under the pressure of conspiracy, a procedure that (to judge from the available evidence) was used without exception until the revolution.

It was in this way that the first central group in Russia came into office at the beginning of 1902. Gershuni, Chernov, and Gots had earlier decided that, in addition to the party papers in exile (which provided a theoretical center), the PSR needed a coordinating authority in Russia to manage practical work. Gershuni suggested assigning this task to one of the existing committees. After the collapse of the Northern Union in the fall of 1901, only one group – that in Samara – was in a position to assume this task. With eight to ten core members, this group was not only large enough to assume these duties but also had sufficient qualified people – namely, Bulanov, the Rakitnikov couple, Al'tovskii, Kraft, Mel'nikov, S.G. Klitchoglu-Mezhovaia (later a terrorist), the economist and *obshchina* specialist K.R. Kachorovskii, and last but not least the so-called "traveling agents" Breshkovskaia and Gershuni.[16] Although the Saratov group still found it "quite a gamble" to present itself as a party,[17] they did not refuse Gershuni's request. In any event, the Saratov group was unable to achieve much as the PSR's first "Central Committee": the Okhrana struck the new party hard, as early as November 1902, by raiding and arresting almost the entire Saratov Committee.[18]

In place of the Saratov Committee, the SRs of Ekaterinoslav – under the direction of Al'tovskii (who escaped the Saratov debacle), and Gershuni's confidant A. Veitsenfel'd – assumed the responsibilities of a central coordinating authority. With over thirty core members, the Ekaterinoslav group, like the Saratov group, had sufficient personnel to accomplish this task. More important, however, the Ekaterinoslav group had two printing presses and thus was technically well equipped. Unfortunately, the Tsarist police promptly eliminated this second "Central Committee," thereby insuring that the PSR could not exploit the favorable conditions in Ekaterinoslav to conduct agitation.[19]

[16] See the membership list in a letter from V.M. Chernov to B.I. Nicolaevsky (without a date but around 1930), NC No. 132, No. 23; and by [N.I. Rakitnikov] Iz pokazanii N.I. Rakitnikova 16.-go marta 1910 g., NC No. 7, No. 100. See as well : O. Bulanova-Trubnikova, Leonid Petrovich Bulanov, in: KiS No. 5 (54), pp. 158–169 and No. 6 (55) (Moscow, 1929), pp. 152–167.

[17] Cf. Rakitnikov, Iz pokazanii N.I. Rakitnikova, NC No. 7, No. 100.

[18] See Obzor vazhneishikh doznanii proizvodivshikhsia v zhandarmskikh upravleniiakh za 1902 god. (Rostov-na-Donu, 1906), p. 12ff. Newly printed as: Letopis' revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii za 1902 god. Pod. red. V. Dobrova (Saratov, 1924).

[19] For the early history of the socialist revolutionary committee in Ekaterinoslav see G. Novopolin, Iz istorii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov v Ekaterinoslave. 1892–1903, in: Puti revoliutsii. (Khar'kov 1926), kn. 4 (7), pp. 64–71; Obzor vazhneishikh doznanii ... za 1902 god, pp. 73–78. For the attempts to renew socialist revolutionary agitation: Okhrana Weekly Report No. 32 from 7 May 1903, p. 2ff. and No. 72 from February 1904, p. 3f., OA XIII c (2) f. 2 and 4.

Apparently learning from these failures, in the spring of 1903 the PSR moved to another organizational form for the center in Russia. According to Sletov, instead of a committee sitting in one city, the party formed a "mobile" body with four authorized representatives of the Central Committee. Each representative was assigned a specific region of Russia. Their mission was to travel constantly throughout their assigned region and establish contact with local SR groups. But even this body, composed of Gershuni, his close assistant M. Rozenblium, Rakitnikov, and Seliuk, was not spared a fiasco. In May 1903 the majority of members, including Gershuni and Rakitnikov, were arrested with the result that "at that time no central party authority existed in Russia".[20] Only in Saratov, despite constant pressure from the Okhrana, was it possible to keep the SR organization alive. This was due to the ability of I.Iu. Starynkevich and I.I. Rakitnikova as well as the support of sympathizers among the "learning" youth. Consequently, the center of the PSR activities in Russia for the remainder of 1903 was transferred back to Saratov.[21]

At about the same time as the arrest of the central group, Sletov was assigned by the SR leadership in exile to travel to Russia. He inspected all the important committees between Minsk and Saratov and found a "desert." He then settled in Kiev to organize a transfer point for illegal literature smuggled into Russia in refrigerators with double walls and other clever hiding places. His objective was to make Kiev a temporary base for the PSR organizational network.[22] But this objective could not be realized because as, early as February 1904, he was forced to leave Kiev to avoid imminent arrest. He settled in Odessa, which already had a lively and well-established SR life under the former narodovolets Ivanov-Okhlonin[23] and N.M. Osipovich. Several leading personalities of the contemporary PSR lived in Odessa, such as the well-known narodniki L.V. Freifel'd and Gedeonovskii.[24] Azef was also in Odessa. His task was to reorganize the Central Committee after the forcible interruption of its work six months earlier. In the course of Azef's work, an incident transpired that illustrates the quite disorderly conditions then prevailing among the leaders of the PSR in Russia and hence deserves our attention.

After Gershuni's arrest, Azef assumed the direction of terror operations for the party. This put Azef's relationship with Sletov under constant strain because Sletov did not hide his aversion to organized terror. Nevertheless, Azef had no choice but to co-opt Sletov and Seliuk into the party's terror operations because of their experi-

[20] See Iz pokazaniia Sletova, ZP No. 4432 f. 1, p. 6 and p. 3, citation p. 3.

[21] See the Okhrana Weekly Report No. 50 from 11 September 1903, pp. 16–18 and No. 82 from April 1904, OA XIII c (2) f. 2 and 4; Iz pokazaniia Sletova ZP No. 4432 f. 1, p. 6.

[22] See A. Kubov [A.A. Argunov], in: Pamiati S.N. Sletova, p. 12.

[23] See Materialy dlia biografii N.I. Ivanova-Okhlonina, PSR Archive 560.

[24] See N. Osipovich, Rasskazy o sekretnykh sotrudnikakh, in: Kandal'nyi zvon. Istoriko-revoliutsionnyi sbornik No 1 Odessa 1925, pp. 155–234.

ence as revolutionaries and their knowledge of conspiracy. In addition, Azef enlisted the aid of several representatives of the older populist generation, namely A.Iu. Feit and Freifel'd. However, neither Sletov nor Seliuk approved of Azef's personnel policy and, as serving members of the Central Committee, demanded the right to be heard regarding every new appointment. Azef rejected this demand by referring to his sole authority in such matters, an authority given by "two" or "three" of the remaining Central Committee members. When the dispute could not be resolved, the three men requested the exile leadership – i.e., Gots and Chernov – to intervene and help find a solution. In their respective attempt, Gots and Chernov approved Sletov's and Seliuk's demand "in principle," but at the same time left the "formal aspect" of the dispute open because everyone was apparently in agreement over the essential question concerning the specific individuals, i.e. Feit and Freifel'd. Gots and Chernov were short-sighted in that they avoided taking a definite position regarding the real question of this dispute, namely the validity of democratic principles in guiding the decisions of the party leadership. Sletov recognized that such a compromise de facto endorsed Azef's dictatorial leadership and resigned in protest from the Central Committee. In addition he informed the party leadership in exile that "in view of a number of fundamental differences of opinion," he would assume new duties only under certain conditions and that he would refuse "every assignment from the Central Committee that involved matters of general organization".[25] In the eyes of the Central Committee, this must have appeared to be nothing more than petty dogmatism, and hence thus it reacted to Sletov's insubordination with the threat of expulsion from the party. But Sletov wanted to avoid an escalation of the conflict and acquiesced to the Central Committee's decision. As he crossed the border on 4 September 1904, Sletov was arrested. His arrest should not come as a surprise: Azef had taken revenge for Sletov's threat by betraying his competitor to the Okhrana.[26]

3.3. Priorities of Agitation

If one examines the form and content of SR agitation before the 1905 revolution, it is difficult to find a difference from the pattern of the 1880s and 1890s. It organized political schooling and general education in the factories, printed and distributed flyers and brochures, and in a few places published the first local party papers.[27] In

[25] For this conflict see Chernov's letter to B.I. Nicolaevsky (no date), NC No. 132, No. 23; Pamiati Sletova, p. 13f. and p. 15.

[26] See Azef's letters to the Police Chief L.A. Rataev in: P.E. Shchegolev (ed.) Provokator. Vospominaniia i dokumenty o razoblachenii Azefa. (Leningrad, 1929), p. 137ff.; Okhrana Weekly Report No. 103 from 16 September 1904, pp. 3–6, OA XIII C (2) f. 4; Pamiati Sletova, p. 15.

[27] Especially in Saratov, see "Neprimirimyi" 1901; "Krest'ianskoe delo" 1903; "Listok Saratovskogo Komiteta" 1903, PSR Archive 519 and 689.

short, to use Lenin's famous phrase, the old "journeyman's work" continued virtually unchanged. The success was uneven.

University students were always an important source of energy in the Russian revolutionary movement and, from the very beginning, the PSR worked hard to win them over. As early as the period during the founding of the party, the students played an important role, especially in Kiev and Khar'kov, and then in the entire Ukraine. The sympathy of the students for the PSR remained strong in the following years. In his report on the activities of the Central Committee, Sletov could report with satisfaction on the "extremely intensive growth" of the SR student organizations. He pointed to St. Petersburg, Odessa, Moscow, Khar'kov, and other cities as examples of success.[28] In addition, the local student associations (*zemliachestva*) unaffiliated with any political party apparently gravitated toward the neo-populist party. Before 1905, students made up the large majority of the activists in the socialist revolutionary committees (for instance, "no less than 75 percent" in Moscow).[29] Thus Breshkovskaia's appeal was not in vain: "Students! Students! Russia has long been proud of you, and now is not the time for you to disappoint Russia with your lack of participation."[30]

What was true for students was no less true for the *intelligentsia* as a whole and especially for that part of the intelligentsia that lived far from the big cities in the province. As an agrarian socialist party, the PSR dedicated special attention to this "landed intelligentsia." The cooperation of the "village teacher," an almost mythical figure in SR literature, was essential for gaining influence over the population in the countryside and evoking a "general revolt of the people." For the Socialist Revolutionaries, the decision in 1903 by numerous village teachers to organize a trade union marked a significant step forward. The PSR achieved an important strategic success when this union later joined the party.[31]

In July 1904, Sletov reported to the second conference of the SR foreign organization that an equal if not greater success was making the workers "aware" of the PSR program. The party program was, according to Sletov, very well received in Moscow, Iaroslavl', Tver', St. Petersburg, Belostok, Berdichev, and Odessa. However, most participants did not believe these reports of success. In a polemic that sometimes became quite heated, Sletov was accused of negligently glossing over the truth and misleading the conference. What they had to say about their own expe-

[28] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514.

[29] See Otvety V.M. Zenzinova na voprosy O.H. Radkey, NC No. 232, No. 58 (4) Question 7.

[30] E.K. Breshkovskaia, K molodoi intelligentsii. 30 marta 1907. PSR Archive 168.

[31] See K voprosu o roli narodnykh uchitelei v sotsial'no-revoliutsionnom dvizhenii, in: RR No. 40 (15 January 1904), pp. 6–8; E. Breshkovskaia, K sel'skoi intelligentsii, in: RR No. 28 (15 July 1903) pp. 6–7; Otchet Komiteta Soiuza Narodnykh Uchitelei Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, in: RR No. 40 (15 January 1904), p. 22.

rience with SR agitation in the cities was in fact quite different. As one delegate carefully put it, the relationship between the party intelligentsia and the masses was "abnormal." For example, the workers in Odessa were not satisfied with the knowledge that they received in the "kruzhki" (circles), for it had not expanded their horizons. The PSR also failed to give adequate support to a workers' conference in Kiev (June 1904). Since delegates to this conference came "from several places in Russia," it had more than just local importance. Breshkovskaia, as representative of the Central Committee, was not prepared to accept this critique. She responded rather sharply that, "because the workers had begun this affair at their own risk, they should not have expected any help. " The workers failed to ask for help; hence, "the guilt for this matter lies with them and not with the socialist revolutionary committees."

The discussions of the second conference of the Foreign Organization demonstrated that it would be a mistake to interpret the leaderships' limited readiness to support the workers as being true of the party as a whole. But Breshkovskaia's reaction did confirm that the numerous complaints of the ordinary party members over the insufficient cooperation of the committee members as well as the general "deficiency of democracy" in the party organization were apparently justified.[32] The working class was much more than just a dark, receptive mass; it clearly demanded more participation. A letter to the central party paper asked: "Why are there such vacuous empty flyers? ... Finally, why are there no workers in the committees and why are they not given responsible tasks?"[33] A delegate to the conference confirmed that "the workers demand a democratization of our organization, and this demand creates conflicts."[34] In opposition to Sletov's euphoric presentation, in 1904 it was very probably true what Okhrana spies reported in the fall of 1902: the PSR could "not claim any success among the workers."[35] The party's agitation was hindered by the same problem that always crippled the revolutionary movement in Russia – the separation between the intelligentsia and the masses, between revolutionaries and the objects of agitation. Should one incline to believe a propagandist from south Russia, SR propaganda suffered because its intended public – the average worker – simply could not understand it.[36]

[32] See Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514; Protokoly II-go s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R (22–28 July 1904) PSR Archive 364b.

[33] K tovarishcham-rabochim (Ob otnosheniiakh mezhdu rabochimi i intelligentami), in: RR No. 15 (25 August 1904), pp. 7–11, here p. 9.

[34] See Protokoly II-go s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R., PSR Archive 364b. A.K. Wildman, The Making of a Workers' Revolution, pp. 90, 250 and passim has demonstrated that Social Democracy was also torn by a deep divide between the workers and the "intelligenty".

[35] See the Okhrana Weekly Report No. 7 from 7 November 1902, p. 4 OA XIII c (2).

[36] See Propagandist, K voprosu o zaniatiiakh v rabochikh kruzhkakh, in: RR No. 49 (1 July 1904), pp. 7–10. The object of criticism was: Program zaniatii v rabochikh kruzhkakh. (Izd. Saratovskim komitetom P.S.-R. 1903 g.) in: RR No. 28 (15 July 1903), pp. 21–23. See also similar instructions in

It seems that the party and urban masses drew closer during the wave of strikes in the cities of south Russia, but only for a short time. Without any cooperation between them, SRs and SDs were especially successful in fanning and partially directing worker unrest in Ekaterinoslav. Despite these successes, the PSR's official report on the Ekaterinoslav strikes could only offer the very carefully worded statement that the local party committee's "relations with the workers organization were not bad."[37]

Agitation among peasants was organized by the early PSR, primarily in the provinces of Viatka, Briansk, Saratov, Orenburg, Ekaterinoslav, Tver', Kiev, Novgorod, Tula, Mogilev, Khar'kov, Kursk, Belostok, Berdichev, Tambov, and in the area of the lower Don.[38] As a rule, this activity was limited to the distribution of flyers and popular tracts. The party workers for the most part did not even attempt to put these materials into the hands of the peasants, but simply deposited them on the sides of streets or in the fields during the harvest. Schooling circles in the countryside comparable to those in the cities were extremely rare. It was also practically impossible to organize demonstrations or other forms of direct propaganda. In the end, it was the demand for literature that served as Breshkovskaia's only argument to prove the success of SR work among the peasants. She averred that there were official warnings of unrest wherever brochures were distributed.[39] There were, however, other witnesses who did not share this optimism. Thus, "Voices from the Countryside" reported that the peasants were not interested in revolt and still believed that everything would be better "when the tsar knew how badly" they lived.[40] The trust of peasants in the legitimate authority of the tsar was by no means blindly transferred to his local agents and noble landowners. Rather, the peasants accused the noble landowners of withholding the fruits of the tsar's supposed concern for his loyal peasant subjects. In general, however, the PSR was unable to profit from peasant anger at noble landowners. Even such an optimistic believer in the peasant revolution as Sletov had to admit this failure. By the middle of 1904, he was convinced that SR work in the village "had not taken on a clear form", that the methods of agitation were ineffective because they were poorly thought out, that everywhere there was not enough literature and propagandists, that – in short – the "organizational work among the peasants was simply weak".[41]

the PSR Archive 340 and in: RR No. 49 (15 June 1904), p. 22.

[37] Vseobshchaia zabastovka v Ekaterinoslave, in: RR No. 33 (1 October 1903), pp. 12–18; Report from M.F. Seliuk over these events in: PSR Archive 374. See also O.A. Parasun'ko, Massovaia politicheskaia zabastovka v Kieve 1903 g. (Kiev 1953); F.E. Los', Formirovanie rabochego klassa na Ukraine i ego revoliutsionnaia bor'ba v kontse XIX i v nachale XX st. (Kiev 1955), p. 241ff.

[38] See Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514.

[39] E.K. Breshkovskaia, Rabota Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov sredi krest'ian i voprosy vremeni. In RR No. 31 (1 September 1903), pp. 4–7.

[40] See RR No. 18 (15 February 1903), pp. 17–18.

[41] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg, PSR Archive 514.

As far as can be determined, Saratov province proved to be an exception. The district of Balashov became a shining example of SR peasant agitation. Due to strong support from the students of the local agriculture school for the PSR, it was possible for the party to do more than just distribute literature and actually press on with a "living propaganda of the word." It was therefore no accident that, as noted above, the Saratov committee in the spring of 1902 organized the first PSR peasant union. The founders of this union were not only the *intelligenty* Rakitnikov, Breshkovskaia, and Kraft but also two peasants who were constantly praised as the embodiment of ideal Socialist Revolutionaries, the Azef'evs.[42]

Any attempt to judge the activity of the PSR in Russia before the 1905 revolution must come to a contradictory conclusion. Breshkovskaia's report to the exile SRs correctly noted the party's success in quickly and rapidly expanding throughout Russia and the relative ease with which printing presses were established and a significant volume of propagandistic literature was distributed among the people. It was also not difficult to recruit illegal workers and to find and tap rich sources of financial support. But Breshkovskaia also noted that these successes were compromised, above all, by serious deficiencies in "the limited number of organizers," by the "size of the population and the territory" (which put the party under great strain), and by the "government's struggle against the PSR" (i.e, by the intervention of the Okhrana).[43] A year later, Sletov came to a similar conclusion in a second Central Committee report in which he complained of a deficiency of competent revolutionaries, lack of financial support, and insufficient literature. But in Sletov's eyes the deeper reasons for these problems were to be found in the failures of the party leadership; in "poorly planned work, ... insufficient cooperation and division of labor, in a word: in the inadequate *organization* of our work." All these problems linked with the inability of the party to establish a functioning central apparatus in Russia.[44] When Sletov was able to draw a positive conclusion and claim that, despite all these difficulties, the PSR succeeded in building a "unified party organism," his conclusion certainly contained a large portion of forced optimism even though it had a kernel of truth. In any case, his claim that in the PSR "everywhere one and the same synthetic socialist revolutionary ideology" was visible, probably was not very convincing in a situation in which the first signs of the displeasure of the Maximalists were appearing.

[42] See I.I. Rakitnikov, Revoliutsionnaia rabota v krest'ianstve v Saratovskoi gubernii v 1900–1902 gg., in: KiS 1928 No. 10 (47), pp. 7–17; Letter from G.A. Gershuni to the first sitting of the ASL (June 1902), Notes, NC No. 7, No. 95. Detailed account in Perrie, Agrarian Policy, p. 34ff.

[43] Zasedaniia uchreditel'nogo s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R. PSR Archive 125.

[44] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti P.S.-R. za 1903–04 gg. PSR Archive 514.

3.4. Relations between PSR in Russia and the Foreign Organization

Like its most important predecessor, the ASL – the objective of the PSR's Foreign Organization – was to provide material and personnel support to the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries. Created in 1903, the organization was committed by its statutes to collecting the necessary financial means primarily through the regular contributions of local groups. In order to attract as many members as possible, the organization reduced entrance qualifications to a minimum and demanded from candidates in addition to membership fees only a profession to the "spirit of the program." This led to a situation in which, by 1904, the Foreign Organization counted twenty-two groups in France, Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland.[45] The direction of activities, above all the maintenance of contacts to the PSR leadership in Russia and the editing of the party paper in exile, was entrusted to the Foreign Committee (*Zagranichnyi komitet*, ZK). The ZK was to be elected yearly by a plenary assembly of representatives of all local groups of the ZO. From the second conference of the Foreign Organization in July 1904, all the important figures of the SR exile community (such as Chernov, Shishko, Volkhovskii, Lazarev, Minor, and Breshkovskaia as representative of the Russian Central Committee) belonged to the Foreign Committee. This meant de facto that the Foreign Committee was identical with the socialist revolutionary leadership in exile, i.e. the board of editors of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*.[46]

Unfortunately, the Foreign Organization could not accomplish the desired objectives. An internal report complained that the local groups (with the exception of the centers of the socialist revolutionary exile community in Geneva, Paris, and London) were completely inactive. There were not enough talented speakers and skilled theorists so that a "systematic propaganda" in the form of lectures, discussion evenings, or assemblies could not be organized. Therefore the "influence on the local [émigré] does not exist at all or was extraordinarily weak, compared with the influence of the Social Democrats and the Union." Even the distribution of the central party paper was unsatisfactory. In general, the situation was "pitiful."[47]

The Foreign Organization's work was also hindered because its relationship with

[45] See Ustav zagranichnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., August 1903 PSR Archive 791/5; Ustav Z.O. P.S.-R. (reworked by the second ZO congress in June 1904), PSR Archive 514. In 1904–05 there were socialist revolutionary groups in: London, Liège, Nancy, Paris, Zurich, Bern, Lausanne, Geneva, Dresden, Freiberg, Leipzig, Halle, Mittweida (Saxony), Heidelberg, Darmstadt, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, Berlin, Munich, Koethen as well as in New York and New Haven; see a list of materials for the second ZO congress, PSR Archive 125, see also PSR Archive 16, 858 and several reports of individual groups, in: PSR Archive 514.

[46] Protokoly Sobranii Zagranichnogo Komiteta s 30 iiulia 1904 g. po 10 sent. 1905 g., PSR Archive 18; also the protocol from 30 July PSR Archive 262.

[47] See the cited overview of the size and activity of the ZO PSR Archive 125.

the Russian Central Committee was "disturbed."[48] Although this impaired relationship was partly due to communication difficulties and the information gaps caused by the pressures of the illegal, conspiratorial environment in which the Russian party had to work, it nonetheless appears that, at least until mid-1904, differences of opinion and struggles between the domestic and émigré leadership of the PSR was the root of all evil. Discussions at the second conference of the Foreign Organization – over a proposed revision of the organization statutes – were dominated by the question of whether the Russian Central Committee should be given a seat and the right to vote in the Foreign Committee. These discussions were remarkably heated. Several delegates of foreign groups resisted any participation of the Central Committee because this would "smother the voice of the Foreign Organization" and destroy its autonomy. Breshkovskaia insisted, in the name of the Central Committee, that the Foreign Organization could not meet "without members of the Central Committee."[49] As always, Chernov tried to find an amicable solution by suggesting that the voting rights of the Central Committee members be limited to general party matters. At the same time, he pointed out to the representatives of the foreign groups in the Foreign Committee that, according to the statutes, they could always outvote the representatives of the Central Committee.[50]

Indeed, the fears of the foreign delegates had no foundation. It is more than likely that their objections merely served to conceal a deep-seated particularism. The SR leadership was never able to eliminate particularism, especially among the foreign intellectuals. At the same time, Breshkovskaia's direct and almost insulting demand that the Russian Central Committee control the Foreign Organization provoked such tendencies. She threatened that, "the Foreign Committee was created by a suggestion emanating from Russia and, in case of conflict, the Russian Central Committee would establish its own foreign bureau."[51] Although an empty threat, it nevertheless revealed the contempt with which the practical workers in Russia regarded the theorists in exile. In the three years of its existence, the PSR was manifestly incapable of developing a strong sense of unity. The animosity between the domestic and exile SRs was a constant source of misunderstanding even in the party leadership.

The negative consequences for SR activities in Russia were unavoidable and soon the source of complaint from both sides of the border. Thus, criticism by the Russian-based party about the lack of information from the foreign leadership were common. However, poor communication was not the least of the worries of the leadership

[48] Otpravka liudei, PSR Archive 18.

[49] Protokoly II-go s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R. (22–28 July 1904), PSR Archive 364b, as well as materials concerning this conference in: PSR Archive 514.

[50] According to the statute (ustav Z.O. P.S.-R., PSR Archive 514) the TsK had seven members and three candidates as well as three representatives of the Central Committee.

[51] Protokoly II-go s"ezda Z.O. P.S.-R., PSR Archive 364b.

inside Russia. In a very revealing letter from Saratov, Rakitnikov complained that the exile leadership caused great harm to the common cause by laying plans around a table in some European capital without any knowledge of the situation in Russia. The directives of the exile leadership led to confusion, and the autocratic-despotic attitudes of their special representatives provoked numerous conflicts with the local committees. As Rakitnikov wrote:

"The persons that you send come with very detailed instructions, and this forces us to the conclusion that the foreign comrades want to take over the direction of affairs in Russia, which puts us in a difficult ... situation. Someone comes with the task of "conducting agitation in the Urals," and looks at us as the gate that he has to go through in order to accomplish his mission. Another comes to organize "fighting squads" in the villages or, even worse, "to tighten up" the committee. Such useless directives often lead to absurd situations in which a man would be sent to conduct agitation in the Urals even though there is no solid party organization. This is the source of great disappointments. But even when the directives are completely correct and correspond to the situation at hand, one must avoid suggesting to the envoys false beliefs that could bring them into conflict with the local organizations."

Rakitnikov therefore made the following recommendation:

"Only one method can achieve this: the envoys must be subordinated to the Russian Central Committee, or *in agreement with it*, sent directly to the local committees. In discussions with those coming to Russia, everything must be done to prevent them from thinking that, when they arrive to work in the local committees, they are not comrades like all the others but instead persons with some kind of 'special powers'. *Therefore there can be only one single directing center – the Central Committee in Russia.*"

In his view, although the leadership role of the Central Committee is largely fictitious, it should not be ignored, for only the Central Committee "could really serve to organize a tightly unified and strong party. The foreign leadership can only ruin the common cause ... The foreign Central Committee members can only act in the name of the central committee or *after checking with it*. There should be no other committees, fighting committees or whatever and no peasant union outside of the local and central party committees."[52]

The PSR's exile leadership did listen to such complaints from the Russian center. Everyone concurred, at least with respect to the analysis of the situation. Even the Foreign Organization commission responsible for sending revolutionaries to Russia recognized that the Russian comrades received contradictory directives from "two

[52] Letter from N.I. Maksimov [N.I. Rakitnikov], no date [probably from the beginning of 1905], PSR Archive 311 (emphasis in original). Unfortunately, the answer of the Foreign Committee which is mentioned in the protocol of the sitting from 5 June 1905 (PSR Archive 18) could not be found.

different centers," which naturally caused confusion and a unified plan of action. In addition, the commission confirmed that, as a rule, the delegates of the Foreign Organization only received instructions from their direct superiors and in this way "ignored the Russian committees." Still more serious was the strong tendency of the delegates to refer to the authority of the foreign committee and thereby disrupt the normal work of local committees and, in short, create an "abnormal situation."[53]

But the Foreign Organization leadership did not appear prepared to agree to the measures suggested by Rakitnikov – despite the general agreement about the source of these pressing problems. In any case, until the outbreak of the revolution, there were apparently no noticeable changes in the relationship between the foreign and Russian party leadership. The Central Committee was *not* given the sole competence in all inner-Russian party affairs, notwithstanding the fact that Breshkovskaia strongly advocated this measure in a letter to the exile leadership in June 1904.[54] The Foreign Organization continued to send mediocre volunteers to the revolutionary front[55] – which tended more to be a burden to the Central Committee than a help.[56] And the friction and conflicts with local party organizations continued unabated, as later complaints attested.[57] These conflicts were the result of a party organization that had two centers. According to Chernov, this organizational dualism was not a problem for the PSR; instead, he accused Social Democracy of suffering from this malady.[58] The chance to eliminate these difficulties and, finally, establish a unified party leadership came in October 1905, when the tsar – under the pressure of revolutionary unrest – was driven to guarantee the right of Russian parties to operate freely. The large colony of Russian revolutionaries in western European exile wanted to take advantage of this opportunity and returned to their homeland.

[53] Otpravka liudei, PSR Archive 18. The commission members were F.V. Volkhovskii, V.M. Chernov and D.A. Khilkov.

[54] Letter from E.K. Breshkovskaia, 20 June 1904, PSR Archive 118.

[55] From July 1904 to June 1905 a total of 67 persons. See Protokoly sobraniia ZK, 6 June 1905, PSR Archive 18.

[56] See Protokoly sobraniia ZK, 5 March 1905, PSR Archive 18.

[57] See below p. 190ff.

[58] [V.M. Chernov], Organizatsionnyi vopros. in RR: No. 68 (1 June 1905), pp. 6–9; RR 69 (15 June 1905), pp. 2–5; also under the pseudonym Iu. Gardenin in: Sbornik statei Antonova, Bakha ... pp. 345–353, here: p. 352f.

CHAPTER 4

The Maximalist Heresy (1904–1906)

The opposition to the SR leadership was not limited to mere words and ideological propaganda. It was only natural that the opposition also wanted to see that their arguments had practical organizational consequences. This conflict, however, threatened the unity of the party, and indeed the fronts of internal party opposition became increasingly hardened as the revolutionary movement advanced in Russia. The young party thus faced a test that it would not be able to withstand: the 1905 revolution proved to be an all too effective catalyst for the centrifugal force of Maximalism.[1] Revolution and Maximalism were inextricably bound together.

[1] For a general overview see the following: V.M. Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma. (Gr. Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista. S. predisl. V.L. Burtseva. Parizh 1910), in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 1 (1910), pp. 175–307); Chernov, Maksimalizm, kak predtecha bol'shevizma, in: idem, Konstruktivnyi sotsializm. Prag, 1925, pp. 134–162; A. Rudin [A.I. Potapov], O 'Maksimalizme', in: Kollektivist. Sbornik statei. M., 1907, pp. 1–35; B.I. Gorev, Apoliticheskie i antiparlamentskie gruppy, in: Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX-go veka. Pod red. L. Martova, P. Maslova i A. Potresova. Tom III, kn. 5: Partii – ikh sostav, razvitie i proiavlenie v massovom dvizhenii, na vyborakh i v dume. SPb. 1914, pp. 473–534; idem, Anarkhizm v Rossii. M. 1930. – A.F. Zhukov, Bor'ba bol'shevikov protiv melkoburzhuaznykh vzgliadov eserov-maksimalistov na kharakter, tseli i dvizhushchie sily sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii, in: VMGU 1970, No. 14, vyp. 3, pp. 18–26; Perrie, Agrarian Policy, p. 91ff.

4.1. Agrarian Terrorists

It is not possible to say precisely when the first predecessors of the Maximalists, the so-called *agrarniki* ("agrarians"), formed themselves into an opposition faction in the PSR. What is certain is that, in July 1904, the second conference of the SR Foreign Organization posited the existence of such a group. Chaikovskii pointed primarily to this faction when he criticized Sletov's report of the Central Committee's activities on the grounds that it failed to present the "picture of the struggle between the several shades of revolutionary thought" in the party.[2] It is also known what question sparked the conflict – namely, the question of "agrarian terror." This political method was understood to mean terrorist acts against noble landowners, and together with "factory terror," was declared to be a heretical deviation from the "political terror" legitimized in 1902. An internal resolution of the SR center against the *agrarniki* offered the following definition: "We understand economic terror to be a system of violent means aimed directly against the persons or the property of the exploiters, but not against the organization of their rule in the state. We understand agrarian terror to be exclusively economic terror that springs from the relationships of the countryside."[3]

The PSR had been confronted with this problem ever since its founding. In long discussions, the party finally developed a posture toward terror that betrayed considerable ambivalence. It argued that economic terror in the city and countryside was essentially spontaneous and represented a direct reaction of the oppressed to injustice and servitude. But precisely this spontaneous, organizationally disfunctional character of terror caused the PSR such problems in finding and taking a coherent position on this question. On the one hand, the party's conception of itself as a revolutionary party required that it endorse the right of workers and peasants to self-defense. On the other hand, the PSR as a party had the task of directing and centralizing revolutionary activity, and hence it could hardly promote spontaneous, individual, and uncoordinated actions. Such spontaneous acts of terror were really nothing more than lynch justice. Moreover, the fear that agrarian terror would become uncontrollable was not unfounded.[4] The SR leadership sought to escape this quandary by means of a solution that was more apparent than real. Namely, it recommended that the party direct agrarian terror as a means of political agitation and give it a "political-moral" basis, as was proposed by Shishko and Zhitlovskii as early as the first meeting of the ASL in July 1902. Nevertheless, agrarian terror was not

[2] Protokoly II-go s"ezda ZO P.S.-R., PSR Archive 364 b.

[3] Nashi zadachi v derevne. Tol'ko dlia chlenov P.S.-R., PSR Archive 791/6; similar: Protokoly 1906, p. 333.

[4] See a letter by Gershuni from 23 February 1906, ZP No. 455, p. 2.

to be become a plank in the party platform.[5] This ambivalent solution, no doubt, nearly provoked opposition from the younger generation that had not been able to participate in the early debates.

The resistance of the younger party members first became apparent at a conference of the Geneva Group of the Foreign Organization. This conference, held in October 1904 and attended by all the important SR politicians, debated two resolutions concerning the question of agrarian terror. The resolution of the SR leadership was written by Chernov and Shishko and signed as well by Volkhovskii, Minor, and M. Gots.[6] It pleaded that the party should carefully plan the long-term organization of peasant agitation. The present task had to be "a general assessment and consideration of the cadres in the countryside that are already conscious revolutionaries." Only those tactical means were recommended that made apparent "the necessity of collective and planned action of the peasant masses in the largest possible area and thereby popularize the idea of organized revolutionary action." In short, the peasantry was to be given a solid and broad basis. Only such measures could eliminate the major deficiencies of the agitation of the peasants, namely the "lack of unification into larger groups" and the limiting of the horizon to the locality. Examples of appropriate tactics were strikes of united agricultural workers, boycotts against the noble landowners, and a universal, categorical refusal to pay taxes or provide recruits and all forms of mutual assistance. Chernov's and Shishko's resolution concluded by definitely and clearly stating that the "systematic and organized agrarian terror led by party elements could not be taken into the action program of the PSR," not only because it would tend to discredit the party but above all because it would make it difficult for the party to "regulate and control" spontaneous terrorist actions. At the same time, however, the resolution hastened to emphasize the necessity of a broad-based political terror and, even more, to explain that the PSR had "in principle never rejected" the acts of revenge of the peasants.[7]

The second resolution was written and defended by E. Iu. Lozinskii ("Ustinov"). As a talented pamphleteer and journalist, he was already one of the leading editors of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* and the theoretical head of the young rebels. He supported his position by an all too simple maximalist logic. Like political terror, economic terror was to intimidate and destroy the ruling class. Flyers and brochures, similarly, must encourage the peasantry to make its contribution toward this goal, that is, to take up the direct struggle with the noble landowners. The party's task was

[5] See Protokoly I-go s"ezda ASL (20 July 1902), PSR Archive 451; Pervyi s"ezd Agrarno-sotsialisticheskoi Ligi (no place of publication, no date); Protokoly I-go s"ezda ZO P.S.-R., PSR Archive 125; Protokoly II-go s"ezda ZO P.S.-R., PSR Archive 364 b.

[6] So Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 193.

[7] Nashi zadachi v derevne, PSR Archive 791/6, p. 2 and p. 4; Zhenevskaia gruppa [Protocol of the sitting from 28 October 1904], PSR Archive 125.

to organize local brotherhoods of the struggle as instruments of this contest. By no means should the party block the agrarian revolution by holding to peaceful methods or any kind of control. Indeed, the party must promote peasant spontaneity. Lozinskii played a significant trump when he described the indecisive position of Chernov and the Central Committee as a form of "double bookkeeping." It would not do to refuse to include agrarian terror in the party program and, simultaneously, "give party members a carte blanche." The majority of the conference participants accepted Lozinskii's argument. As a result, the Central Committee's position suffered a humiliating defeat. Lozinskii's resolution was approved by 24 to 16 votes even though "the better part" of the party was on the other side.[8]

This triumph of the opposition, however, remained the exception. The PSR founding party conference a year and a half later proved that the opinion of the exiled intellectuals in Geneva certainly did not represent the opinion of the party as a whole. The delegates to the party conference gave almost unanimous approval to the position of the party leadership. Thus was the final official tactical line of the PSR in regard to terror decided. Using the old arguments of the Central Committee, Rakitnikov explained this position in the name of the commission for questions of agrarian tactics by stating that "agrarian and factory terror is definitely negative" (since it cannot lead to the revolutionary seizure of land) and, because it is simply "a series of disparate acts," it cannot have an educational effect on the masses – indeed, it does just the opposite by disorganizing the masses. At the same time, terror is held to be an "essential and unavoidable" defensive tool against the violence of the noble landowners. The delegates to the party conference judged "factory terror" (i.e., acts of terror by the workers, especially against exploitative owners) to be analogous to agrarian terror. In principle "factory terror" was rejected as a simple act of revenge and therefore not useful in reaching the objective of the revolutionary struggle of the "complete destruction of the capitalist order." However, there were exceptional cases in which terror was accepted and even encouraged.[9]

While the intellectuals in their Geneva exile continued with theoretical skirmishes, the new principles were being practiced in Russia. In the summer of 1904, the Central Committee gave green light for this experiment. With the encouragement and financial support of the Central Committee a group of *agrarniki* crossed the border. This group was lead by M.I. Sokolov, a young but already experienced peasant agitator from Saratov province. Sokolov's powerful, charismatic personality and his

[8] See Zhenevskaia gruppa, PSR Archive 125.

[9] See Protokoly 1906, p. 332f; also: Ot Tsentral'nogo Komiteta. Po voprosu ob agramom i fabrichnom terrore, in: ZT No. 3 (1 August 1907), p. 12; Po povodu fabrichnogo terrora, in: Revoliutsionnoe delo. Organ Donskoi oblasti P.S.-R. No. 1 (March 1908), pp. 4–6, PSR Archive 623; K voprosu o fabrichnom terrore, in: Trud. Rabochaia gazeta. Izd. Peterburgskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 17 (October 1907), pp. 7–9, PSR Archive 472.

virtually unlimited radicalism and audacity soon propelled him to an influential position, making him one of the most controversial and almost legendary maximalist leaders.[10] As Chernov later respectfully emphasized,[11] tolerance of the party central was due to the sympathy that many older SRs – such as Sletov, Khilkov, and Breshkovskaia – had for younger party members. It was especially Breshkovskaia – the "Grandmother of the Revolution" – who shared Sokolov's opinions in essential points. Like the younger Populists, she insisted on the necessity of the "initiative of the minority" and was not afraid of isolated actions. She argued in favor of agitation among the peasantry not only through peaceful means, but also to "awaken" them through terrorist activities. Instead of a centralized fighting organization she recommended the construction of a decentralized net of local terror brigades.[12] In addition, because her revolutionary engagement had the same extreme emotional tone as the younger generation, she became their natural protector in the party leadership. Despite her closeness, however, Breshkovskaia did not share the limitless radicalism of her protégés and admonished them to engage in "mature activity".[13]

Such advice had little effect. The tolerance of the party center for the young radicals was already exhausted by the very first flyers of the *agrarniki* in Ekaterinoslav that boldly encouraged "economic terror." Even rumors of extortion filtered out to the exiles. Sokolov's proclamation in Minsk (November 1904) was the straw that broke the camel's back: "Strike at the Tsarist civil servants, the capitalists, and the noble landowners! Strike ever more strongly and demand land and freedom." Not without cause did Chernov label the style of such proclamations "pogrom-like".[14] Sokolov was ordered to Europe to report to the exile leadership, and after declaring his loyalty, received permission to resume his work in Russia. To prevent such excesses, Sletov was assigned to oversee Sokolov but was arrested while crossing the border[15] and hence could not accomplish his task. Sokolov was caught only half a year later, in April 1905, by the Tsarist police.[16]

The radical agitation of the Sokolov group in Belorussia and Ukraine not only made the PSR program look ridiculous, but also unleashed an intense level of conflict in the exile leadership. As Volkhovskii wrote to his old comrade Breshkovskaia in January 1905, the *agrarniki* intended to build "a party within the party" and to

[10] See I. Petrov, Pamiati M.I. Sokolova, in: Sbornik 'Volia Truda'. M. 1907, pp. 155–179, I.I. Rakitnikova, Revoliutsionnaia rabota v krest'ianstve v Saratovskoi gubernii v 1900–1902 gg.

[11] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 195.

[12] See Chapter 2 note 97. see further: Letters of the "agrarniki" to Breshkovskaia, PSR Archive 799, as well as: E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, Primechanie No. 1 [1904], PSR Archive 118.

[13] See Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 186 and p. 196.

[14] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 198.

[15] See Chapter 3, note 28.

[16] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 310ff.; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 198ff.

take a position "outside any kind of party discipline."[17] A splitting of the party became practically unavoidable as Breshkovskaia's protégés published their own paper in May 1905, which was called *Vol'nyi Diskussionnyi Listok* ("Free Discussion Paper"). The radicals justified this step on the grounds that the established party press refused to publish articles about agrarian terror and that freedom of opinion was no longer secure. And soon after that Lozinskii left the party.[18] Now the party leadership was confronted with the question of whether the new paper should be recognized as the expression of a new current in the party or should be rejected as heretical. Chernov followed what was for him an unusually hard line, whereas many veterans of Narodnaia Volia, infected with the revolutionary fever then prevalent in Russia, were prepared to give their blessing to organized mass terror. B.G. Bilit[19] was perhaps the best example of those who believed that the party program did not prevent anyone from "going beyond socialization of the land." He also argued for the distribution of *Vol'nyi Diskussionnyi Listok* just like every other party program.[20] Although Chernov's line appears to have succeeded, the maximalist current was by no means finished. In fact, just the opposite happened when, toward the end of 1905, the Maximalists received support from another group of dissidents in the PSR. This group, known as the "Moscow Opposition," is generally regarded as second source of Maximalism.

4.2. The Moscow Opposition

As a result of the extraordinary capability of new leadership, the Moscow committee had, since the end of 1904, developed into the most solid and largest base of the party in Russia.[21] Its work was a model for all other committees. Rich financial resources were tapped and the production of literature was promoted. More important was the committee's success in winning a significant number of talented agitators capable of attracting a large number of Moscow workers who already sympathized with the Socialist Revolutionaries. Despite its attention and care, however, the leadership

[17] See Letters bv F.V. Volkhovskii to E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia from 8 and 21 January 1905, PSR . Archive 779.

[18] See Kopiia ... zaiavleniia Evg. Ustinova [E.Iu. Lozinskii] v Tsentr. i Zagr. Kom. PSR ot 20 noi. 1905 g. OA X c f. 1; Doklad V.M. Chernova o "Vol'nom Diskussionom Listke" [and the answer Lozinskii's], 29–30 September 1905, PSR Archive 258. – -Vol'nyi diskussionnyi listok. Izdanie gruppy Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. Paris No. 1–3 (May–July 1905); Antonov, Po povodu 'Vol'nogo Diskussionogo Listka, in: Sbornik statei Antonova, p. 376f.

[19] Pseudonym probably "Borisov" although for this period we are not sure.

[20] See Protokoly zasedaniia Zhenevskoi gruppy, 29 September 1905, PSR Archive 258; Manuscript Chernov's to "Volnyi Diskussionnyi Listok," PSR Archive 18; also: Protokoly III-ei konferentsii ZO, 25–31 [!] September 1905, PSR Archive 654.

[21] See below p. 234ff.

failed to allow new recruits from the intelligentsia to participate in the direction of party activities and to integrate them into existing organizations. Instead, a schism between the leadership and intelligentsia was opened. At the party grass roots (at the raion level), an energetic opposition formed around V. Mazurin, M. Uspenskaia, D.V. Vinogradov, S.Ia. Ryss, O. Klimova, and others. This opposition found great resonance and quickly established a solid foundation. Protesting against the oligarchy of party committees, the Moscow opposition denigrated the party leadership, and not without cause, as "a bunch of people who were rich and had good connections and who completely ignored the mass of party members".[22] They demanded the total democratization of the entire organization, elimination of the co-optation principle, and the inclusion of the party periphery into positions of influence in the leadership.[23] Among the factors contributing to the schism, not least important was the increasing dominance of the younger party members by a new type of strong willed, much more radical and anti-intellectual revolutionary.[24]

As early as November 1905, the opposition won a decisive concession when, "with revolutionary methods," it forced the closing of raion assemblies for delegates from the committees. Now that the local committees lost all influence over the raions, the door was now opened to transform the raions into secure bastions for the opposition. As long as the opposition and the committee fought together during the uprising of December 1905, they either ignored their differences or deferred any attempt to resolve them. But as soon as the decision had to be made about who would represent the Moscow organization at the founding party congress in Imatra, the conflict immediately came out into the open. Normally, the delegates would have been elected by an assembly of the members. Because this was impossible under current circumstances, however, the committee acted unilaterally to appoint two of its own members and one from the opposition. According to Chernov's not entirely objective account, the opposition representative could not be found, and hence in the end the Moscow delegation consisted exclusively of those supporting the committee.[25]

Naturally, those who had been passed over reacted with a storm of anger. This incident was judged to be yet another crass example of manipulation by the local "party dictators," and the opposition therefore refused to recognize the decisions

[22] Uspenskaia according to Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 205.

[23] See a "platforma" of the Moscow opposition, PSR Archive 333; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 204.

[24] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 203..

[25] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 206 (citation) and p. 209; G. Nestroev, Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova. Paris, 1910, p. 31. – Delegated were I.I. Fundaminskii (probably "Karskii"), V.V. Rudnev ("Roshchin") and M.V. Vishniak ("Pomortsev"). See Vishniak, Dan' proshlomu, p. 119ff.; Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 266ff.

of a party council from which they had been excluded. Attempts by the central Oblast Committee to find a solution failed when the opposition raised unacceptable demands – such as recognition of the unlimited autonomy of the Moscow organization in its internal affairs, renewal of the existing organization from top to bottom, and repeal of the right of intervention (which empowered the Central Committee to intervene in cases where offenses against the party statutes and party discipline were suspected).[26] The differences deepened to an unbridgeable chasm.

A short time later, a "fighting brotherhood" under Mazurin's leadership "expropriated" the enormous sum of 800,000 rubles in a spectacular bank robbery. Blessed with such substantial financial resources, the opposition believed that it was strong enough to turn its back on the mother party and found its own party, the "Moscow Organization of the PSR." At the same time it tried to increase its influence over other socialist revolutionary committees by making massive "donations." Especially in Stavropol', which became of the most secure maximalist bastion, but also in Ekaterinoslav and Riazan', these efforts enjoyed some success. Of course the party center correctly labeled such actions as simple bribery. Still, one must also consider that those organizations accused of bribery permitted themselves to be "bribed" – either because their revolutionary ethics was not all too exacting, or because political currents existed (or even dominated) that made them amenable to appeals from the Moscow opposition.[27]

The organizational independence and expansionism of the Moscow opposition gave the conflict a new dimension that now transcended a single region. The Central Committee felt compelled to become engaged: in April 1906, it ordered Chernov personally to convene and lead a general conference of the Moscow city organization and to resolve the matter. The opposition, however, refused to participate, for it did not recognize the Central Committee elected at the first party congress. Instead, it was only prepared to send two representatives to the first meeting of the PSR party council. But here too it proved impossible to reach a solution, and the final break could not be prevented. The majority of the dissidents in the capital organized themselves under Mazurin's leadership in the "Moscow Union of the Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries" (*Moskovskii soiuz sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov maksimalistov*). Even though their ranks were by this time significantly thinned and all of their leaders were under arrest, in December 1906 they joined Sokolov's Maximalists. Only a minority could make this final step. This minority did build the

[26] See "platforma", PSR Archive 333.

[27] See Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 210ff.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 309ff. Regarding the charges of corruption, Nestroev responded in kind against the PSR in: Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova, p. 32.

short-lived "Group of 1 May" (*Gruppa pervogo maia*), but soon, approximately in the summer of 1906, returned to the PSR.[28]

4.3. The Organization, Theory and Dispersion of Maximalism

Directly after the first party congress, Sokolov called a conference to lay the cornerstone of an independent maximalist organization. Even though this attempt did not succeed and his travels after the conference did not achieve any concrete results, nevertheless the Maximalists did at least found a "battle organization" to substitute for the organization that had not come into being. It was certainly no accident that the organizational form of Maximalism was that of a terror commando.[29]

Assassination, extortion, and robbery were the essential, indeed the only, purpose of Sokolov's group. These activities absorbed all of the group's energy and left nothing for "peaceful" agitation of the masses.[30] To name just the most spectacular deeds: in the spring of 1906 the Maximalists robbed the Moscow Merchant Bank and took a considerable sum; on August, 12 they made a botched attempt to assassinate Stolypin, which did not harm the Prime Minister in the least but took twenty-three other lives; on October, 14 the treasury of the Sokolov group was filled one last time with the "expropriation" of almost 400,000 rubles. Based on these successes, in October 1906 Sokolov founded the long-anticipated comprehensive Maximalist organization, the "Union of Maximalist Socialist-Revolutionaries" (*Soiuz sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov maksimalistov*). Unfortunately for Sokolov, this new organization was not to exist for long, because the Okhrana promptly arrested both Sokolov and his most important comrades-in-arms. With its leaders gone, this poorly organized Maximalist union rapidly disintegrated. The collapse was so complete that all attempts at revival were unsuccessful.[31]

Such a collapse without leaving a trace indicates something important about the organizational structure of the "Union." According to its statute and maximalist creed, the Union's organization was distinctive for its practice of democracy without any limits and extreme decentralization. The "Central Executive Bureau" was to be elected by an assembly of all members that was to meet regularly. And de-

[28] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 310.

[29] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 312f.

[30] See Nestroev, Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova, p. 63, who saw in the absence of peaceful agitation the most important cause for the failure of Maximalism.

[31] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 313ff. For the attack on Stolypin see also: M.M. Engel'gardt, Vzryv na Aptekarskom ostrove. (Po dokumentam Leningradskogo istoricheskogo revoliutsionnogo arkhiva), in: KiS No. 7 (20) 1925, pp. 67–94; Obvinitel'nyi akt po delu o ... Nikolae ... Pumpianskom, ... Liudmile Emelianovoi ..., in: Byloe. Paris 1909, No.9–10, pp. 106–157. The founding of the "Union" was officially made known in: Sushchnost' maksimalizma. SPb. 1906, p. 5ff.

spite the need for absolute secrecy, even the leadership was unable to act without the approval of the grass roots.[32] Of course, as with the Moscow opposition,[33] the requirements of the statutes did not correspond with the reality of day-to-day work. Every decision was made by Sokolov, who held all the threads in his hands. Even the Maximalist G. Nestroev had to admit that " 'the bear' [*medved'*, i.e., Sokolov] was a born dictator ... Everything was done that he wanted done,"[34] including initiatives that were strongly criticized, such as the development of the terror commando into an autonomous organization. The monopolization of the leadership in Sokolov's hands was so extreme that after his arrest the Central Executive Bureau "had absolutely no idea where anything was,"[35] and above all it did not know the whereabouts of the largest part of the 400,000 rubles that had been "expropriated" in St. Petersburg. Only 60,000 rubles could be found. The same symbiosis of centralism and corruption that the PSR was accused of was also to be found with the Maximalists. Not unjustly (although his intent was apologetic) did Chernov call the "Union of the Maximalist Socialist Revolutionaries" a "finance oligarchy."[36]

As the Maximalist movement progressively established itself as an independent party, it became necessary to develop a program and define party objectives. It was certainly symptomatic that the dissidents at first came together to find a new form of action and only later offer a justification for this new form of action. Theory was not their strong suit, and their contribution in this area was limited essentially to radicalizing socialist revolutionary positions. Their program can be summarized in just a few points.[37]

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[32] See Sushchnost' maksimalizma, p. 15f; G. Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista. S predisloviem V.L. Burtseva. Paris 1910, p. 64.

[33] Critical about their organization: Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 211.

[34] Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista, p. 64; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 302.

[35] Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista, p. 64.

[36] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 222. It must have been difficult for Chernov to pose as the guardian of revolutionary morals. Despite all attempts at avoiding saying so he had to admit that the PSR treasury did receive a significant portion of Mazurin's theft of almost one million (according to I. Zhukovskii-Zhuk, Vladimir Mazurin, in: KiS 9 (1924), p. 248, 100,000 rubels). Further, Nestroev insisted that the Central Committee also participated in Sokolovs expropriation in St. Petersburg in October 1906. See Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista, p. 80ff.; Nestroev, Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova, p. 34, p. 73ff.; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 224ff.

[37] See for the following out of an extensive literature: Sushchnost' maksimalizma. Sbornik statei. M., 1907; Sbornik "Volia Truda'. M., 1907; Volia Truda. Sbornik statei. SPb. 1907; M.M. Engel'gardt, Zadachi momenta. SPb. 1906; Engel'gardt, Vrednye i blagorodnye rasy. SPb. 1908; E.Iu. Lozinskii, Chto zhe takoe, nakonets, intelligentsiia? Kritiko-sotsiologicheskii opyt. SPb. 1907; Lozinskii, Itogi parlamentarizma. Chto on dal i mozhet li on chto-nibud' dat' rabochim massam? SPb. 1907; Lozinskii, Itogi i perspektivy rabochego dvizheniia. SPb. 1909; Lozinskii, Sovremennyi anarkhizm. M. 1906; E. Ustinov (Lozinskii), Kakova dolzhna byt' programma russkoi Revoliutsii; [G. Rivkin], Trudovaia respublika. SPb. 1907; [Rivkin], Priamo k tseli. 1907; Tag-in [A.G. Troitskii], Otvet Viktoru Chernovu. SPb. 1906; Troitskii, Printsipy trudovoi teorii.

The "first commandment" for Maximalists was to realize the socialist revolution immediately. As one highly influential maximalist theorist expressed it: "Only the person who believes that the socialist revolution can be realized now can be called a socialist."[38] Consequently, the founding congress of the Union issued the slogan calling for action to prepare for an "immediate social revolt." Assuming that the "working people" already existed, Maximalists summoned them to seek the "economic and psychological realization" of the new social order – in short, "the complete development of the personality of the working person".[39] The Maximalists were not interested in whether the working people were ready for a revolt. A representative collection to maximalist theory, for example, contains the following remark: "It is completely meaningless whether the majority of the proletariat is composed of socialists." What was necessary to bring about the revolution was simply a "people that was generally influenced by the consciousness of the working people" (*trudovaia psikhika*) and, above all, a "closed, energetic, and aggressive minority".[40]

The Maximalists did try to prove that the situation was "ripe." For example, Nestroev observed that Germany had more small firms than Russia and that the revolution was due there at any time, and then, in a remarkable leap of logic, argued that the destruction of autocracy in Russia was that much nearer.[41] But such speculation was in any event unnecessary because the one and only real question was the seizure of power. Chernov objected that this reduced socialism to a simple act of "occupation" that could occur at any time.[42] In order to justify such crude activism, the Maximalists did not recoil from racist arguments. Thus did a maximalist brochure declare in all seriousness the rulers to be a "robbing race" (whose evil drive to exploit was inherited just like their skin color) and consequently must be ruthlessly destroyed if socialism was to be realized. Class war became race war and the extermination of the capitalists like that of the cockroaches, to use Chernov's biting mockery, was to be its most natural method.[43]

From such a version of the "actuality of the revolution" (Lukács) came the only, relatively concrete programmatic demand articulated vehemently by the Vitebsk delegate at the first PSR party congress and constantly raised in Lozinskii's *Vol'nyi diskussionnyi listok*: revolution should not be limited to minimal wishes within the bounds of the bourgeois order but rather must directly begin the "socialization of the

[38] Tag-in, Printsipy trudovoi teorii, p. 94.
[39] Sushchnost'maksimalizma, p. 6.
[40] G. Nestroev, Beglye zametki (Ot minimalizma k maksimalizmu), in: Sbornik 'Volia Truda', p. 64.
[41] Nestroev, Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova, p. 43.
[42] Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 259; see also Chernov, Anarkhizm i programma-minimum, in: Soznatel'naia Rossiia. Sbornik na sovremennye temy. No. IV. SPb. 1906, p. 46.
[43] See I. Pavlov, Ochistka chelovechestva. M. 1907; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 231.

factories and enterprises".[44] How the construction of the new society was to be organized was a question that divided the small group of Maximalists just as completely as the larger PSR. There were at least four positions, each of which represented a separate current in the very fractured camp of the extreme neo-populist left.

M.M. Engel'gardt (M. Aleksandrovich) argued for an "absolute Maximalism" that denied the necessity of a transition phase to socialism. He also denounced the advocates of a differentiation between "social" and "socialist" revolution as "Minimalists in Maximalism." His radicalism found little resonance, however. Another current of opinion did argue for a transition stage after the "socialization of factories and enterprises" and devised the concept of the "Laboring Republic" (*trudovaia respublika*). This current included two variants – syndicalist (an Artel'-Maximalism that sought to transfer land and factories to local self-governing organs) and "communalist" (seeking to give these resources to comprehensive territorial associations).This second variant was close to Lozinskii's supporters (the *Ustinovtsy*), who had first propagated the "communalist method of revolution." This group soon separated itself from Maximalists and went over to the Makhaev movement. It is not hard to recognize that this building of factions repeated the front lines of decisive discussions in the PSR.[45]

The similarities between the PSR and Maximalists can also been seen in their position on the Duma. Like the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Maximalists refused to participate in this crippled popular assembly. Unlike the SRs, however, the Maximalists opposed in principle any form of parliamentary government, which they castigated as nothing more than a "lightning rod ... of discontent"and a fraud perpetrated on the people.[46]

Although Maximalism deserves little attention as a theoretical current and as an organization (the PSR rightly judged it to be an unoriginal variation of Anarchism),[47] it should not be ignored, however. The left radicalism in the neo-populist camp did not simply exist as a Moscow opposition and agrarian terrorism, but rather built a

[44] See above p. 99ff., as well as: E. Ustinov [E.Iu. Lozinskii], Kakova dolzhna byt' programma russkoi revoliutsii, p. 7; Nestroev, Iz dnevnika maksimalista, p. 6.

[45] See Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 263ff. and the literature from note 37 of this chapter. For the Makhaevists: M.S. Shatz, The Makhaevists and the Russian Revolutionary Movement, in: IRSH 15 (1970), pp. 235–265.

[46] Sushchnost' maksimalizma, p. 13; Kakovo nashe otnoshenie k parlamentarizmu?, in: Vol'nyi Diskussionnyi Listok No. 1 (May 1905), pp. 4–5.

[47] See Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 174ff.; Chernov, Anarkhizm i programma-minimum pass. The Maximalists did not regard Anarchism as a related current and in fact made every effort to distance themselves from it. See E. Ustinov [E.Iu. Lozinskii], Kakovo nashe otnoshenie k anarkhizmu?, in: Vol'nyi Diskussionnyi Listok No. 2 (10 July 1905), pp. 1–5. For the attitude of the anarchists to the PSR see Anarkhisty i Sotsialisty-Revoliutsionery, in: Khleb i Volia No. 9 (May 1904), pp. 1–3; Agrarnyi terror, in: Khleb i Volia No. 1 (August 1903), pp. 3–4.

spontaneous mass movement at the SR grass roots. It embodied, in essence, the destructive violence of the revolution. As such it manifested itself in excessive political terror, in a disregard for the ban against "economic terror," in pseudo-revolutionary rowdiness, in extortion, and especially in expropriations. The Maximalists did not shy away from using a "tactic" – so spectacularly confirmed by Mazurin's million-ruble robbery – as a legitimate method of the socialist liberation struggle. Using a truly weird logic, an obituary for Mazurin maintained that "the confiscation of private capital is the revolution itself."[48] And an official "revolutionary-theoretical" attempt at justification put forward a similar, though not nearly so rough, argument when it was claimed that expropriations were appropriate means to destroy "the fetish of property." The author of this tract was at least honest enough to mention its most important result: "fill the treasury".[49] And indeed here the *nervus rerum* was named, without any euphemism. Like all revolutionary groups, the Maximalists needed money, indeed a great deal of money. And because of poor organization, the usual method of financing – from membership dues – could not be used, even if they wanted; and they were the last people to whom well-off citizens would make monetary donations. Hence expropriations provided the simplest solution to this problem. Maximalism in this form became almost an epidemic during the revolution and hardly a socialist revolutionary committee was spared. The PSR leadership took this seriously and fought it with the utmost energy.

Where the efforts of the PSR leadership were unsuccessful and the dissidents had solid bases is impossible to say. It was rare that the local organizations split. Nevertheless we can name some centers of the secessionist movement. Maximalism began in White Russia, where Sokolov in 1904 had begun to call openly for agrarian and factory terror. Belostok became an important center. The Socialist Revolutionaries of this city had split from the PSR even before the first party congress. Further independent maximalist organizations grew up by the end of 1906 in Pinsk, Grodno, Briansk, Minsk, Vil'na, Vitebsk, and Dvinsk. Although the large majority of these bases only lasted a short time, a concerned PSR Oblast conference determined in February 1907 that the influence of the Maximalists in West Russia was "rapidly" growing.[50] Unmistakably maximalist tones were also to be heard in the Ukraine,

[48] Pamiati Vladimira Mazurina. Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet Oppozitsionnoi fraktsii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, PSR Archive 621.

[49] Gr.S. Taktika 'ekspropriatsii', in: Sbornik statei. M. 1907, pp. 45–64, p. 51, p. 61.

[50] See Koe-chto o maksimalistakh. (Pis'mo iz Smolenska), in: Partiinye Izvestiia. Izd. Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (citation: PI) SPb. No. 8 (12 April 1907), pp. 3–5; Protokoly konferentsii predstavitelei Bezhitskogo, Brianskogo ... rabochikh soiuzov PSR (23 December 1907, PSR Archive 425; Citation: Protokoly Severo-Zapadnogo oblastnogo s"ezda [February 1907], PSR Archive 483; very instructive: Mikhail Ivanovich, Anarkhizm v Rossii, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 3 (1911), pp. 75–94.

especially from Ekaterinoslav, Chernigov, Kiev, and Khar'kov.[51] The same was also true of the Urals. Here the idea of a terrorist partisan struggle was extremely popular and even approved by an official socialist revolutionary Oblast-conference.[52] Although the Maximalists had little resonance in Russia's north, there was some support in Vologda, Pskov, and Arkhangel'sk.[53] As noted, Moscow was probably the most important bastion of the new current in the central industrial region.

More clearly than regionally Maximalism can be defined in social terms. All socialist revolutionary commentaries agreed in the observation that it found its sphere of influence "exclusively among the workers". E.g. in Briansk the "workers' association of the PSR," which had more than a thousand members, left the party as a whole. In contrast the peasantry and the intelligentsia hardly felt attracted by the left opposition. Thus, Maximalism can be considered as a plebeian radical neo-populism.[54]

In an interesting interpretation, Chernov tried to explain this social and geographic distribution by referring to Russia's socio-economic backwardness. He explained that immature capitalism integrates craftsmen and above all peasants "with a good dose of healthy barbarism and complete psychological foreignness into the new order." Instead of the "worker socialized in the process of production," Russian industrialization creates "more often than anywhere else" the "unsocialized, lonely, restless rebel." It was no accident that Russia was the birthplace of the apostles of international anarchism, Bakunin and P.A. Kropotkin.[55] Thus maximalism and anarchism appear as the "pre-proletarian" social protest and "primitive social movements"[56] that appear in the early phase of industrialization and reflect the limited organizing capabilities of backward capitalism. Chernov's interpretation, however, did not cover all aspects of maximalism. Above all it neglected the important fact that the left protest movement in the PSR, as an Oblast conference in White Russia determined, was borne almost exclusively by the SR youth.[57] Next to the socio-economic factor one must also add a generational factor.

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[51] See Rezoliutsii E. [katerinoslavskogo] komiteta po voprosu ob ekonomicheskom terrore i boevykh druzhinakh, PSR Archive 553/I; Iz Chernigova K voprosu ob izmenenii partiinoi programmy, PSR Archive 482; I. Shklovskii, Nakanune 1905 g., in: Iz epokhi bor'by s tsarizmom No. 5 Kiev 1926, pp. 124–138; K. Galkin, Anarkhistskie i terroristicheskie gruppy v Khar'kove (Po dannym okhranki), in: Puti Revoliutsii No. 1, pp. 51–63; No. 2, pp. 64–79; No. 3, pp. 13 6–151, Khar'kov 1925.

[52] See Ural'skii Oblastnoi s"ezd (16 December 1907), in: ZT No. 7 (27 October 1907), pp. 14–16.

[53] See Protokoly III-go Severn. oblastnogo s"ezda (October 1906), PSR Archive 208.

[54] See Koe-chto o maksimalistakh, in: PI No 8 p. 3; Protokoly Sev.-Zap. Oblastn. s"ezda, Archive PSR 483.

[55] See Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 177.

[56] See for the concept, socio-economic placement and typology of "primitive", "archaic" social movements: Hobsbawm, Sozialrebellen. See also P. Lösche, Anarchismus-Versuch einer Definition und historischen Typologie, in: Politische Vierteljahresschrift 15 (1974), pp. 53–73.

[57] See. Protokoly Sev.-Zap. oblastn. s"ezda [February 1907], PSR Archive 483; similar: Protokoly II-go Severn. oblastn. s"ezda, PSR Archive 208.

CHAPTER 5

PSR Tactics in the Revolution of 1905–1907: Between Agitation for Revolt and Peaceful Opposition

On 9 January 1905, the tsar's soldiers violently attacked a peaceful column of workers demonstrating in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The shots fired by the soldiers killed a number of petitioners whose only desire was to give the monarch a list of their requests. Those shots signaled the start of the first Russian revolution. The workers reacted to this senseless brutality with a wave of strikes that encompassed all Russia and shook the foundations of power in a state weakened by a lost war against Japan (1904–1905). This assault on state power was all the greater because liberal circles of the intelligentsia, middle class, and nobility joined ranks with the protesters and exploited the weakness of autocracy to push demands for democratic rights and a constituent assembly. An oppressed Russian society demanded participation and began to organize at all levels – in parties, in trade unions and professional organizations, and last (but certainly not least) in workers' councils of the proletarian revolution.[1]

[1] See S. Harcave, First Blood. The Russian Revolution of 1905. (London, 1965). The Orthodox priest G.A. Gapon, who led the column of demonstrators on 9 January 1905, soon afterwards established close contacts with the RSDRP and especially, through the efforts of the SR sympathizer P.M. Ruten-

The revolt sprang quickly from the cities to the countryside, igniting an agrarian revolution that had been presaged by peasant revolts in Khar'kov and Poltava provinces in 1902. An acute shortage of land, hunger, bad harvests, the sacrifices of the war against Japan, the politicization generated by reports from the returning soldiers (to name only the most important causes) – all this strengthened the conviction of the peasantry in many parts of European Russia, especially in the black-earth zone, that only expelling the noble landowners would end their misery. The latent dissatisfaction of the peasantry was now openly expressed.[2]

At the beginning of 1905, Rakitnikov reported from Saratov that the proclivity to use terror in the village could hardly be stopped. All that was needed was the signal to start. The peasants, he wrote, would come to the cities with "the glow of last night's fires on their faces" and they would ask: "Now what is going on in Piter [St. Petersburg], what is happening by you, is it time?"[3]

These events gave revolutionary parties the chance to test their theoretical concepts and tactical plans sooner than most expected. The SRs were optimistic that their party would pass this test. After all, did not the reality of revolution confirm the axiom in their theory of revolution that only a revolt of workers and peasants together could force autocracy to its knees? Because the PSR was active in both the city and the countryside and paid special attention to the oppressed agrarian masses, it had a decisive role in a revolution that would be decided in the village. The unexpected failure of the peasants to engage in large-scale revolt in early summer 1906 would demonstrate the village's importance to the revolution. To determine how well the PSR played its role, here we shall examine its tactical decisions and its reaction to the central problems (revolt, the State Duma, and trade unions) as well as its organization and grassroots practice.

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berg, to the PSR. In the fall of 1905 he also began to work for the Okhrana. As early as the beginning of January 1906 he made the fatal mistake of attempting to talk Rutenberg, who in the meantime had joined the BO of the PSR, into betraying the party. Rutenberg informed the Central Committee, which gave the order to arrest Gapon. Rutenberg's contact Azef held this decision to be insufficient because he saw in the priest a dangerous fellow spy and so he simply changed the arrest order into an order to murder Gapon. In March Gapon was led into a trap by Rutenberg and killed. See B. Nikolaiewsky [B.I. Nikolaevskii], Asew. Die Geschichte eines Verrats. (Berlin, 1932), p. 127ff. Delo Gapona, in: Byloe 1909 No. 10–12, p. 29–122; P.M. Rutenberg, Ubiistvo Gapona (Leningrad, 1925); W. Sablinsky, The Road to Bloody Sunday. Father Gapon and the Petersburg Massacre of 1905. (Princeton, 1977).

[2] As a first class source for the agrarian revolution see Agrarnoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1905–1906 gg., in: Trudy imperatorskogo vol'nogo ekonomicheskogo obshchestva (SPb. 1908) No. 3 and 4/5; also: Dubrovskii, B. Grave (eds.): Agrarnoe dvizhenie v 1905–1907 gg. Materialy Departmenta politsii (M. 1925).

[3] See Letter N.I. Maksimov's (N.I. Raktinikov), PSR Archive 311.

5.1. Militant Agitation

Like all the revolutionary parties, the PSR rejoiced at the reaction of the masses to Bloody Sunday. From the very beginning it saw the demonstrations as more than just ordinary strikes and more than a mere economic struggle. Drunk with victory, *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* expressed the party's attitude toward the demonstrations by describing them as the "threshold of the revolution." It appeared that what SR agitation had worked for years was now about to be realized – a "revolt of the people" that would bring an end to the Tsarist order.[4] The central party paper warned that waiting and delay would be the death of the young movement. The party must seize the opportunity and could not afford to respond with mere economic strikes (like the Social Democrats). Rather, the PSR must apply "the tactic of terror, individual as well as mass terror, ... armed demonstration, ... to the tactic that directly leads to revolt." The call to arms ended with the unambiguous demand: "Down with considerations and prejudices against militant means!"[5]

The SRs sought to act accordingly. Local committees established armed militias, the so-called "fighting brotherhoods;"[6] the party decentralized terrorist activities and attacked the state on a broad front by assassinating its local representatives[7]; it issued general guidelines for proper action in the case of revolt;[8] with Japanese money, it purchased an entire shipload of weapons and prepared detailed plans for an uprising in St. Petersburg.[9] Nevertheless, all of these initiatives proved unsuccessful; SR activities did not in fact correspond fully to the militant appeals of the party leadership. In August, when the vessel *John Grafton* ran onto a reef near the Finish coast, the

[4] Preddverie revoliutsii, in: RR No. 58 (20 January 1905), pp. 1–2, here p. 1

[5] Boevoi moment, in: RR No. 59 (10 February 1905), pp. 1–2.

[6] See Proekt instruktsii o podgotovitel'noi rabote i boevoi taktike P.S.-R. Prilozhenie k No. 67 "RR" (15 May 1905), pp. 1–3. Also: Ustav Gorodskoi militsii P.S.-R., in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 6–7; Ustav Krest'ianskoi boevoi druzhiny P.S.-R., in: PI No. 1, pp. 7–9; The statutes of local and regional fighting brotherhoods and terror brigades are in: PSR Archive 124.

[7] The number of local acts of terror increased dramatically in 1905. See Pamiatnaia knizhka sotsialista-revoliutsionera. Vyp.II (Paris, 1914), pp. 8–24.

[8] See *Ot Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov.* Nakaz, PSR Archive 330. (e.g. destroy telephone lines, occupy police stations, take over the railroads etc.)

[9] The Finnish revolutionary K. Cilliacus obtained the weapons with the approval of the socialist revolutionary leadership in exile (see a letter from F.V. Volkhovskii to K. Cilliacus from 3 July 1904, PSR Archive 789/10; A. Fischer, Russische Sozialdemokratie und bewaffneter Aufstand im Jahre 1905. (Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 107 following: M. Futrell, Northern Underground. Episodes of Russian Revolutionary Transport and Communications through Scandinavia and Finland 1863–1917. (London, 1963), p. 66ff. Chaikovskii and the socialist revolutionary explosives expert B.G. Bilit directed the transports from London (Chernov, Pered burei, p. 234f.). According to Chernov the transaction was financed by the donations that Breshkovskaia collected during a triumphal tour through the USA in 1904. According to Zenzinov (Letter V.M. Zenzinov to M.M. Shneerov, N'iu Iork, 4 December 1952, NC No. 7, No. 109) the PSR did not know that Cilliacus received money to buy the weapons from Russia's enemy Japan.

PSR lost its weapons and abandoned plans for an armed uprising. Terrorist attacks did have some effect, but the long-sought mass upheaval did not ensue. Finally, militant demonstrations did not have the expected results; according to police sources, only in Smolensk, Nizhnii-Novgorod, and Dvinsk did the Socialist Revolutionaries play a leading role. Except for Briansk, even the May Day rallies failed to evoke the desired echo. In Odessa, swept in June 1905 by street battles following a mutiny on the armored cruiser *Potemkin*, it did help the PSR considerably that they were the only party with weapons.[10]

There were reasons for this difference between the claim and reality of SR agitation. Chaikovskii's accusation that the PSR leadership denied the "necessity of the armed revolt" surely goes too far. M. Gots was justified in protesting against such "unfair scorn" and pointed out that Azef had been sent to St. Petersburg to investigate the situation and that a revolt would have to be coordinated with the other parties.[11] It was also superfluous for Breshkovskaia to challenge the editors of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* to dedicate more attention to the peasant movement because "the Russian Revolution ... was the organization and arming of the peasants."[12]

Nevertheless, SR leadership did move cautiously behind the scenes, despite its verbal militancy, for it knew all too well that the Russian organizations were in no position to organize revolt. As early as January the central party paper concluded that the strikes had broken out without the initiation of the revolutionary parties and were not being directed by them;[13] by the fall of 1905, the PSR apparently was still incapable of making decisive changes to improve the situation and to win significant influence among the workers and peasants. The third Foreign Organization conference in September 1905 addressed this unfortunate state of affairs directly. The report from Chernov's Central Committee did in fact paint a rosy picture, emphasizing that the PSR was active in every city in Russia. The majority of delegates, however, simply refused to believe him. In their opinion, the Central Committee had done "almost nothing" prepare the party for battle.

The Central Committee's claims notwithstanding, the party could not point to successful activity in the Volga region, for the peasants – "often completely arbitrarily" cheered one or another speaker without regard to party affiliation. Indeed, the party suffered a painful defeat in southern Russia. The Central Committee was accused of being incapable of mastering the situation; nor could the "disorganization of the party" be overlooked. Chernov countered by denying some details of these

[10] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 166ff.; for the events in Odessa: RR No. 73 (15 August 1905), pp. 21–24; RR No. 74 (September 1905), pp. 16-17.

[11] M.R. Gots to N.V. Chaikovskii [12 August 1905], NC No. 115, No. 14.

[12] Letter from E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, 2 July 1905: Dlia svedeniia predstavitelei Ts.K. zagranitsei, PSR Archive 616.

[13] Nekotorye uroki ianvarskikh dnei, in: RR No. 59 (10 February 1905), pp. 2–5

charges, but in the end he and his co-worker Minor had to admit that such criticisms were indeed justified. He was therefore forced to reduce his original, unlimited optimism and extend the consoling hope that, once the organizational deficiencies were eliminated, the party could then experience "great successes" because of the program's appeal to the broad masses.[14]

5.2. Experiment in Legalism: Cooperation between the PSR and Legal Populism

Just a few weeks after the second conference of the party's Foreign Organization, there was a decisive change in the Russian political scene. On 17 October 1905, the tsar was forced by a new wave of strikes and demonstrations to agree to call a parliament and secure civil rights. A few days later, the implications of this event for the PSR became the subject of discussion by a group assembled around the editorial board of *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia*. The exiles Gots, Chernov, Shishko, Minor, and B.V. Savinkov were all hurriedly called together in Geneva for this purpose.[15]

The majority of those present did not believe in the tsar's new promise and, instead, saw merely a further attempt at appeasement (similar to the powerless Duma proposed a short time earlier by Interior Minister A.G. Bulygin). M. Gots was especially skeptical. Shishko, Minor, and Chernov agreed with Gots but argued that one should exploit the current weakness of the tsarist state and the opportunities for legal activity as long as the conspiratorial core of the party was not endangered. Accordingly, terrorist tactics were modified to accommodate the new situation. Assassinations were to be deferred until further notice, although the Fighting Organization was to remain "under arms."[16] Chernov had already decided, at the beginning of October (after the outbreak of strikes) to return to Russia and was given the task of founding a legal central party paper, "a great political paper." This new paper was to coordinate peaceful activities in accord with the October Manifesto. The need for such a paper in Russia was all the more necessary because *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* could not offer timely commentary on rapidly changing events because of the long delays in the flow of information and shipping necessarily involved in publishing a Russian paper in western Europe. *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* began to lose ground to the legal papers in Russia that could address more immediate and pressing problems.[17]

[14] See Protokoly III-go s"ezda ZO P.S.-R. (25–31 September [!] 1905), PSR Archive 654.

[15] For the following: M.V. Chernov, Ot "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii" k "Synu otechestva", in: Letopis' Revoliutsii. Kn. I-aia. (Berlin [1923], pp. 66–99; Chernov, Pered burei, p. 237ff.; A.V. Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli. (K voprosu o politicheskikh gruppirovkakh v narodnichestve). (Petrograd, 1918); Erofeev, Liberal'nye narodniki zhurnala "Russkoe bogatstvo" v 1905 g.

[16] Chernov, Ot "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii", p. 75f.

[17] Chernov, Ot "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii", p. 78. For the October strikes: Harcave, First Blood, p. 199ff.;

It was an obvious step for Chernov to turn to the editorial board of the *Russkoe bogatstvo* in St. Petersburg for help in realizing his task. Here he found a staff of exceptionally talented authors with many years of experience in legal journalism. In addition, the PSR and Legal Populism still regarded each other as related currents, notwithstanding fundamental differences of opinion. Contact between the PSR and Legal Populism had not ceased; after all, Peshekhonov had helped to found *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* and had later published programmatic articles in the PSR's central party paper.[18]

Chernov was pleasantly surprised by the cooperation with Mikhailovskii's heirs. Although it was out of question for *Russkoe bogatstvo* to become the PSR's legal paper, the first meeting found an appropriate paper in the left-populist *Syn otechestva* (Son of the Fatherland). The first difficulties arose as the contents and political line of the new paper were debated. From the very outset, Annenskii in particular made no bones about his skepticism regarding the PSR. Peshekhonov and Miakotin were cooperative but shared essentially the position of their friend.[19]

Above all, the conflict concerned two problems of significant tactical importance. The representatives of *Russkoe bogatstvo* disapproved of the PSR's support for the spontaneous seizure of land. In their opinion, such self-help was against the law and hindered an orderly and just land reform. Chernov succeeded in resolving the conflict by stating that he was in principle also against the "black repartition" (*chernyi peredel*), which was only to be approved in exceptional cases. He constructed a common position by pointing out that the PSR completely supported Peshekhonov's slogan that the peasants should only take provisional ownership of the land.[20]

Annenskii also insisted on the immediate founding of a democratic party open to all populist currents and hence did not refrain from demanding the dissolution of the PSR as a conspiratorial organization. That proposal was too much for Chernov. He rejected such a maneuver as dangerous nonsense, especially in a situation "where, at any moment, a counter-revolutionary attack could be mounted."[21] The discussions were in danger of collapsing and the already scheduled negotiations with the editorial board of *Syn otechestva* appeared superfluous. At literally the last minute, both sides agreed to make at least an attempt at cooperation – despite all the difficulties. Com-

Fischer, Russische Sozialdemokratie, p. 137ff.; L.M. Ivanov, Boikot Bulyginskoi Dumy i stachka v oktiabre 1905 g. (K voprosu o rasstanovke boriushchikhsia sil), in: IZ 83 (1969), pp. 159–195; I.V. Spiridonov, Vserossiiskaia politicheskaia stachka v oktiabre 1905 g. (M. 1955).

[18] For example: p. Novobrantsev [A.V. Peshekhonov], Osnovnye voprosy russkoi Revoliutsionnoi programmy, in: RR No. 32 (15 September 1903), pp. 4–7.

[19] Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli, p. 3.

[20] See A.V. Peshekhonov, Agrarnaia problema v sviazi s Krest'ianskim dvizheniem. (SPb. 1906), p. 5ff., p. 34ff.

[21] Chernov, Ot "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii", p. 92.

promise was possible because Chernov agreed in principle to a democratization of the PSR. Of course, Chernov made realization of this intention dependent on future political developments. He regarded democratization of the PSR as an experiment, whereas his partners understood it as a basic change in tactics already completed. Although a large majority of the board of directors of *Syn otechestva* approved the proposed changes and although the publisher S.P. Iuritsyn and the editor-in-chief G.I. Shreider proved to be competent and reliable co-workers, Chernov simply could not fully rejoice when he received Gotsen's complements for a job well done. The success of the project depended critically upon Peshekhonov's and Miakotin's participation, but their participation could be ended at any time.

Numerous differences of opinion and conflicts in the editing and publishing of the new paper soon appeared. According to Peshekhonov, these problems resulted primarily from the tendency of SRs to try to introduce "methods and habits of the underground" that the legalists of the *Russkoe bogatstvo* did not approve.[22] It was thus unavoidable that the papered-over programmatic differences again became a serious problem. The experience of the December uprising caused the fronts to harden even more, for it was now clear that autocracy had by no means been defeated. In the PSR, the modest optimism about the possibilities for legal action began to dissipate, as did indeed the basis for cooperation between Legal and Revolutionary Populism. As the PSR's first party congress convened, the marriage of convenience was already virtually over. Annenskii, Miakotin, and Peshekhonov went to Imatra "without hope."[23]

The first point of discussion – the question of organization – sparked open conflict as the legalist troika lodged an ultimatum that the PSR be changed into a non-conspiratorial mass party. Miakotin justified this demand by claiming that the PSR does not deserve the title "party," since it is simply an organization of fighters. Indeed, not only is it beyond public control but also its policy-making apparatus is so constructed that orders are simply passed down the hierarchy.[24] In his view, the party admitted all sorts of thieving rabble and morally questionable elements – as was demonstrated by the epidemic of expropriations. The PSR had also failed to achieve the main objective of every populist renewal movement, namely the integration of numerous sympathizers among the intelligentsia. At the same time, opposition on the right wing was sufficiently realistic not to demand that the PSR dissolve itself. Hence Peshekhonov suggested that two parallel organizations be created, one conspiratorial and the other legal. He was careful to insist on the condition that the legal organization should not be subordinate to the conspiratorial organ. As the majority

[22] Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli, p. 3.
[23] Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli, p. 3
[24] Protokoly 1906, p. 47; Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli, p. 4ff.

of delegates to the party congress were veterans of the underground in Russia, they probably regarded this suggestion as a risky utopia and were almost unanimous in rejecting it.[25]

Hence the final break was assured. Annenskii, Peshekhonov, and Miakotin wanted to leave the party congress but heeded the entreaties of the party leadership to stay until the program was discussed. The result, however, was only to deepen the split between the SRs and what later became the People's Socialists. The conflict over nationalization and socialization pertained only superficially to a somewhat unclear vision of a future socialist transformation of society. Behind this debate was an immediate tactical problem, namely, the question of how one should react to the "black repartition." In negotiations with the *Russkoe bogatstvo* group, Chernov may have called the spontaneous occupation of land an evil, yet he did approve such actions – as well as the local agitation that encouraged peasants to declare war on the noble landowners. He could not have expressed the true attitude of the PSR more clearly when he spoke to delegates of the All Russian Peasant Union (*Vserossiiskii krest'ianskii soiuz*, VKS) in November 1905: "The party cannot agree that we wait for a Constituent Assembly to decide all current questions. The workers and the intelligentsia will not wait for the realization of their rights through the Constituent Assembly, but will realize their rights on their own."[26]

It was precisely this tactic, however, that Annenskii opposed. He wanted to realize the land reform only "by means of the organized will of the people using legal methods." Only the Constituent Assembly should have the right to change the existing property and social order in the countryside. When asked how he assessed the application of revolutionary violence, Annenskii replied: "One can create a people's state that takes the land by using revolutionary means; but one should not awaken the illusions of the peasants that they change anything by direct occupation."[27] Between this and the socialist revolutionary position, compromise was indeed impossible.

Shortly after the first party congress, the authors of the *Russkoe Bogatstvo* founded their own party – the "People's Socialist Party." Although the party wanted to be open, democratic, and non-conspiratorial, it apparently did enjoy much appeal among the putative public – the liberal populist intelligentsia. The significance of this party was never more than that of a mere circle of intellectuals. According to Chernov, it remained what Legal Populism always was – "a brilliant literary staff without an army."[28] One should therefore not call the cessation of cooperation ex-

[25] Protokoly 1906, p. 65f.

[26] See Protokoly delegatskogo soveshchaniia Vserossiiskogo Krest'ianskogo Soiuza. (M. 1906), p. 88.

[27] Protokoly 1906, p. 91 "Korenev".

[28] Chernov, O "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii", p. 90. For the program and the further history of the "Narodno-sotsialisticheskaia partiia" see above all: Trudovoi Narod. Narodno-sotsialisticheskoe obozrenie.

periment a split in the party.[29] The break simply marked the failure of an honorable, repeatedly attempted but finally untimely illusion of a populist united party.

5.3. The Test: SR Agitation and the Missed Revolution in 1906

The hopes of revolutionary parties for political freedom and the chance to act legally died in the fighting that erupted after the Moscow Soviet called for a general strike on 7 December 1905. The Moscow revolutionaries remained isolated; a locally limited strike of railroad men could not prevent the arrival of tsarist troops. Even the unified armed forces of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries (both parties decided together to risk this dangerous enterprise) were unable to offer much resistance against the power of tsarist rifles and cannons. The revolution suffered its first and decisive defeat within a week.[30] These events proved how justified the skepticism of socialist revolutionary leadership had been – notwithstanding the belligerent tone of party propaganda. Chernov's sober estimation of the strength of the revolution in October, when he commented on the concessions of the state by saying that "fear has large eyes," seemed confirmed as well.[31] He recognized quite realistically that the Russian opposition had only won its early successes "on credit."[32] In accordance with a vote of the PSR in the St. Petersburg Soviet, Chernov warned delegates at the All-Russian Congress of Railway Workers (which met in Moscow at the beginning of December) not to try a test of strength with the autocracy. However, the SRs in Moscow disregarded instructions from their Central Committee and believed that the workers of St. Petersburg would join the revolt. Their hopes were disappointed. Despite a call for a general strike, "almost nothing" happened in the capital.[33] This failure had fatal consequences for the rebels in Moscow and the revolution as a whole.

What was to be learned from the events in December and what tactics were to be

Vyp. I, II, (SPb. 1906); Trudovoi Narod. Pod red. V.A. Belaeva. SPb. No. 1–11 (1906–1907); Narodnyi Trud. Narodno-sotsialisticheskoe obozrenie. Vyp. I, (SPb. 1906); Narodno-sotsialisticheskoe obozrenie. Vyp. I, II. (SPb. 1906); A.V. Peshekhonov, Na ocherednye temy. Nasha platforma. For the socialist revolutionary criticism: Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 221ff.; P.A. Vikhliaev, Narodno-sotsialisticheskaia partiia i agrarnyi vopros, in: Sbornik statei. No. 1 (SPb. 1907), pp. 74–93.

[29] The "Syn otechestva" received a new, purely socialist revolutionary editorial board and despite being often banned it could publish until the dissolution of the first state Duma in the summer of 1906. See Syn otechestva. Vykhodit ezhednevno. Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia i literaturnaia gazeta (SPb. 1905, 1906). Also: Chernov, Pered burei, p. 264; A. Argunov, Azef v partii S.-R., in: Na chuzhoi storone. Istoriko-literaturnyi sbornik Vol. 6 (Berlin-Prague, 1924), pp. 157–200, Vol. 7 (1924), pp. 47–79, here Vol. 6, p. 189.

[30] See Harcave, First Blood, p. 232ff.; Fischer, Russische Sozialdemokratie, p. 172ff.

[31] Chernov, Ot "Revoliutsionnoi Rossii", p. 95.

[32] Protokoly, 1908, p. 95.

[33] Chernov, Pered burei, p. 259; Chernov, K kharakteristike maksimalizma, p. 207.

used in the future – these two issues were the central topic of debate in the PSR at the first party congress, held shortly after the fighting ended at the end of December. It was no accident that conflict over this point on the agenda was particularly intense. Chernov presented the opinion of the majority of the commission that prepared a draft resolution on the political situation. For him, there was no question that the unfortunate end of the Moscow uprising completely confirmed the careful tactic of the Central Committee and hence this tactic must be upheld. The revolution had not suffered a defeat but had entered a new and difficult phase. Furthermore, Chernov pointed out that revolutionary thinking had not yet taken sufficient hold of the consciousness of the peasantry. There were repeated contradictory events whereby the party registered "on the one hand the singing of our peasant Marseillaise and on the other the beating up of teachers and 'red intellectuals'."[34] The picture was also regionally very different: eagerness to fight in some areas, indifference in others. Chernov concluded: "We can and should not call for an armed revolt because there is no guarantee that it will succeed," and because, as Minor added, "we do not possess sufficient strength to direct a movement."[35] The PSR had to concentrate on creating the organizational basis for a revolt and to intensify the terror. The party should prepare itself spiritually and technically to place itself at the head of a revolutionary movement. It should by no means take any chances and try in initiate a premature uprising.

The proposals of the second speaker, the Moscow delegate V.V. Rudnev (representing the commission's minority),[36] tended precisely in the direction of irresponsible Blanquism. He was supported by the speakers of the Maximalist wing, the radical representative from Vitebsk, and the moderate Rakitnikov as well as the old Narodnik and representative of the London committee Volkhovskii.[37] They all estimated the political situation quite differently from Chernov. Whereas the latter saw a relative consolidation of the tsarist state, they saw only rubble. Ginzburg, for example, maintained that "the government machinery is completely disorganized, the bourgeoisie not fully organized and partially disorganized, and dissatisfaction prevails among many segments of the population."[38] Nor should one be misled by the defeat in December. Indeed, the street battles and the open fight between tsarism and revolution strengthened the Maximalists in their opinion that, as Rakitnikov noted, Russia "stood on the eve of a decisive crisis." The tempo of the Russian revolution

[34] Dobavlenie k protokolam pervogo s"ezda Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. (no place given) (1906), p. 32.

[35] Protokoly 1906, p. 309 and p. 323.

[36] Pseudonym "Roshchin".

[37] Pseudonym "Glazov". The true identity of this cover name is not completely secure but on the basis of several clues probable.

[38] Protokoly 1906, p. 320. See also Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 202ff.

was unusually fast, faster than that of the French Revolution. The PSR must use this favorable situation to call for an immediate mass revolt. Otherwise, in their view, the party would lose a singular historical chance because a "direct realization" of socialist revolutionary "demands by revolutionary means is possible." If the party missed "the current moment," then it is "very probable that such a possibility would never again be offered and the way to the socialization of the land would be completely different" and the result would be a "slower and non-revolutionary, ... not revolution, but reform."[39] Rakitnikov admitted that the peasantry had not sufficiently accepted the PSR program and that they were only sporadically integrated into the party organization. But the dissidents met such hurdles with an unbroken belief in the spontaneity of the masses: "The movement will expand and we must count on this inevitability and prepare for it." The question of revolt would be decided by "life itself." Volkhovskii drove this position to an extreme of irrational, suicidal heroism: when "a desperate attempt [for the socialization of the land] is necessary, then the party may go under but the agrarian revolution lives."[40]

The majority of delegates were not impressed with the mentality of the barricades. They approved Chernov's moderate resolution, despite numerous votes against it. "Moderate," of course, does not mean that the approved resolution advocated a solely peaceful policy, but rather announced a continuation of the "tactics of struggle" – the intensification of terror and, for the first time, even the opening of partisan warfare.[41]

In the spring of 1906, the PSR waited with great tension and complete preparedness for action. Unfortunately for the party, spring brought nothing but disappointment and humiliation. Not only did the long-awaited agrarian rebellion (which was to sweep away the Tsarist yoke) fail to materialize but, even worse, the "great majority" of peasants took part in elections for the first Duma – despite appeals by the PSR and the All-Russian Union of Peasants for a total boycott.[42] The conflict between Maximalists and orthodox SRs may not have been eliminated, but it did lose immediacy. Instead of searching for the mirage of mass revolt, the PSR had to find a way out of tactical defeat. The PSR could not avoid recognizing the Duma with its unexpected Kadet majority as an oppositionist, if not a revolutionary, organ. It also had to admit that the Duma would have great influence on the peasantry. The party

[39] Protokoly 1906, p. 327, p. 325 and p. 329; see also Rudnev, Protokoly 1906, p. 316.

[40] Protokoly 1906, p. 322 ("Glazov").

[41] See Protokoly, p. 331. The resolution was approved with 32 against 19 votes. It is published in: A. Kubov [A.A. Argunov], Svod postanovlenii obshchepartiinykh sovetov i s"ezdov, in: Pamiatnaia knizhka sotsialista-revoliutsionera. Vyp. I, (Paris, 1911), pp. 15–70), here p. 64.

[42] See the pessimistic statement by Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 218. For the relationship of the peasantry and the Duma: Dubrovskii, Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie, p. 117ff.; A.I. Nil've, Prigovory i nakazy krest'ian vo II gosudarstvennuiu dumu, in: ISSSR 1975 No. 5, pp. 99–110.

was guilty of a gross misunderstanding of the political situation in the villages and assumed that its own wishes reflected the reality in the countryside.

The PSR was freed from this tactical *cul-de-sac* by the dissolution of the Duma that the tsar ordered on 9 July 1906. The tawdry conclusion to this constitutional experiment had been predicted and hence justified the boycott. By breaking his word, the monarch demonstrated to the public that one could not negotiate with autocracy; hence only the complete elimination of autocracy could bring the long-awaited political liberation. The Tsar's coup strengthened the case for SR agitation. One could not have found a better time to return unreservedly to a tactic of attack, revolt, and political terror. This tactic had been suspended during the session of the first Duma.[43] The PSR Central Committee supported the protest of the dismissed Duma representatives (the Vyborg Manifesto); in partial cooperation with the Social Democrats, it prepared an armed uprising in the naval ports of Kronstadt, Sveaborg, and Reval (Tallinn);[44] it also drafted a strategy for a coordinated revolt of workers and peasants to join the mutiny. Revolt and mutiny were to be assisted by a strike of railway workers.[45] Once again, SRs believed that the decisive conflict with autocracy had arrived and, once again, concentrated their efforts

[43] According to a decision of the party council from May 1906. See Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 65. Also: Sawinkow, Erinnerungen, p. 153; Nikolaiewsky, Asew, p. 150.

[44] See below p. 150ff. Cooperation, however, remained very limited. One must note that Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries continued their bitter feud even during the Revolution and only in very rare cases were they able to cooperate in actions against the autocracy. As far can be judged, the PSR was not as guilty as the Social Democrats. The PSR had always argued for a united front of all opposition forces in Russia and had demonstrated its seriousness by participating in a unification conference that was held in Paris towards the end of 1904 with the cooperation of the liberal "Soiuz osvobozhdeniia" (Union of Liberation) as well as a second less important attempt in the spring of 1905. The Social Democrats, probably due to Lenin, did not participate in either conference. (See Chernov, Pered burei, p. 209ff.; Dokumenty mezhdupartiinoi konferentsii, in: RR No. 65 (25 April 1905), pp. 1–3 and pp. 3–7.) At the beginning of 1905 Natanson established contacts between the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Men'sheviki, but the Liberals were excluded. These contacts led to a "Unification Project" that envisioned cooperation in agitation and the arming of the masses as well as "mass revolts" and "terrorist attacks." (Proekt soglasheniia. March 1905, signed for the Social Democrats by Plekhanov, P.B. Aksel'rod and L.G. Deich, NC No. 125, No. 3). Aside from the revolt in Moscow in December (of which the PSR Central Committee did not approve) this plan does not appear to have been realized. In the flood of reports of the socialist revolutionary local committees one finds very seldom indications of cooperation with the RSDRP (for example [Tverskoi Komitet PSR] Fall 1907, PSR Archive 428; Kratkii ocherk razvitiia s.-r. organizatsii v g. Shue Vladimirsk. gub., PSR Archive 563; 1905 god v Samarskom krae. Materialy po istorii R.K.P. (b) i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia. Pod red. N. Speranskogo. (Samara, 1925), p. 327).

[45] See the detailed presentation of this strategy in the speech of the Central Committee representative (probably Chernov) at the first All-Russian conference of the socialist revolutionary peasant agitators in September 1906, published in: Volia. Politicheskaia, obshchestvennaia i literaturnaia gazeta. Nagasaki. No. 90–91 (6 January 1907), pp. 5–11; Original in: Protokoly s"ezda krest'ianskikh rabotnikov P.S.-R. v sent. 1906 g., PSR Archive 133. See also: Vyborgskii Manifest i ego lozungi, in: Trud No. 3 (October 1906), pp. 1–4. Very rich material is contained in: G.M. Derenkovskii, Vseobshchaia stachka i sovety v iiule 1906 g., in: IZ Vol. 77 (1965), pp. 108–153), for the PSR's tactics p. 125ff.

on seeking to arouse the peasants. The question of *how* to do this remained unanswered.

As already pointed out, the early phases of SR peasant agitation were limited primarily to the distribution of literature. The villages were, for the most part, closed to revolutionaries. That situation changed, however, when the spark of urban unrest ignited the countryside. Beginning in the fall of 1905 (and in some distant provincial cities only in early 1906), almost every SR local committee had a "peasant specialist" or even a "peasant commission."[46] The factors that produced this change are easy discernible. First, the outbreak of revolution gave the PSR the personnel and financial means to make regular trips through the endless Russian provinces. In fact, agitation consisted to a large part of just these trips. Second, the October Manifesto guaranteed the basic political freedom for such activity, although one could not directly propagate SR views in the village (as opposed to the cities) but had to hide behind the banner of party neutrality. Finally, although the agrarian population was not yet ready for revolutionary ideas, it was at least receptive to anti-tsarist and oppositionist slogans. The lost war against Japan contributed powerfully to this new receptivity among the peasantry. From Poltava province, for example, came the following declaration: "One saw that the war brought nothing and also the constant defeats of the Russian army on land and at sea, as well as the letters from soldiers in the war where the difficult situation, the incompetence of the authorities, the constant malnutrition, the poor clothing, and the poor footwear were described – all this provoked complaints and dissatisfaction."[47]

In order to exploit this rapid political mobilization of the peasantry, the PSR needed a new organization. The old peasant union from 1902 was ineffective and in no position to master the current situation. In June 1905, it ceded its place to the "Central Peasant Union of the PSR" (directed by the "Central Peasant Bureau") and, from the summer of 1906, the "Central Peasant Commission in the Central Committee" (*Tsentral'naia krest'ianskaia komissiia pri TsK PSR,* known by the abbreviation TsKK).[48] At the lower party levels, these measures were supported, at least on paper, by a hierarchy of party cells in the countryside – beginning with the peasant brotherhoods and proceeding to the township (*volost'*) and provincial (*guberniia*)

[46] See for example: Ustav iuzhnoi-russkoi oblastnoi Krest'ianskoi komissii P.S.-R., PSR Archive 546/1. Almost without exception was the begin of the peasant agitation dated by the local committees to this late point in time. See especially the answers to an inquiry of the organization bureau in the PSR's Central Committee from February 1907 dispersed in the PSR Archive, 327, 328, 208, 623, 326, 426, 171, 320, 471, 487, 553/I, 553/II, 482, 486, 463, 460, 682. An investigation of the peasantry at the end of 1907 brought the same results, PSR Archive 799.

[47] Poltavskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 799.

[48] See Tsentral'nyi Krest'ianskii Soiuz P.S.-R., in: RR No. 72 (1 August 1905), pp. 20–21; Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 19; O Tsentral'noi Krest'ianskoi Komissii, PSR Archive 691.

committees. In a paper on the organization of the peasantry, the TsKK laid special emphasis on the need to eliminate the difference between city and countryside and to achieve "a large representation of the lower organizations in the higher as well as a stronger participation of the party members from the counties [*uezdy*] in party life." The TsKK had, as a long-term goal, even proposed that *uezd* delegates (mainly peasants should live as permanent residents in the cities, for only with complete information and equal participation of party comrades from the village would the PSR "be the true representative of the interests and the carrier of the ideals of all levels of the working people." Only thus could the democratization of the party organization be achieved.[49] Such thinking did point precisely to the Achilles heel of the PSR work in the province, but proved unrealistic.

In August, the "Central Peasant Union" began publishing its own periodical. Its title carried the old populist slogan of *Zemlia i Volia* ("Land and Freedom"), which also expressed the program of the new paper. This title had the added advantage of allowing the poorly informed peasantry clearly to identify the paper politically.[50] Objectives and tactics of the SR peasant agitation were presented in a popular way. The first priority of the new paper was the insistent attempt to coordinate the dispersed and singular outbreaks of violence, the arson and the pillaging that were reported by local committees in the entire country and to bundle all these individual acts into common action. Chernov and Shishko set "planning" and "organization" against the Maximalist demands for "agrarian" terror. They also repeated the calls of the Peasant Union that the short-term objectives of SR work be concentrated in the villages and that the needs of the village must be the measure for the selection of PSR's instruments in carrying out its political work.[51]

Such appeals, of course, contradicted another tactic approved by the first party congress: "massive" (and above all peasant) "partisan war," which found wide acceptance in the years of the revolution.[52] Agrarian partisan war was understood to be the "independent struggle of the organized peasantry against the government"; its objective was to destroy all "enemies of the people," such as the police and other civil servants in the city and countryside, as well as "all government installations, papers, and documents, but also military installations and lands that serve the army and civil servants."[53] It soon became quite clear, however, that such actions were

[49] Kratkie zamechaniia po voprosu ob organizatsii krest'ian i krest'ianskikh rabotnikov PSR, PSR Archive 122.

[50] See Zemlia i Volia. Izd. Krest'ianskogo Soiuza P.S.-R. SPb. No. 1 (August 1905), then: Izd. Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R. Paris No. 1 (20 January 1907) – No. 26 (April 1912), PSR Archive 511.

[51] Nashi zadachi v derevne, PSR Archive 791/6.

[52] Resolution of the first party congress, Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 64f.

[53] Rezoliutsii Khar'kovskogo gubernskogo s"ezda krest'ian i krest'ianskikh rabotnikov P.S.-R. 23 okt. 1906 g., in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), p. 10; Rezoliutsii krest. s"ezda Saratovsk. gub., in: PI No. 4

in no wise helpful to the revolutionary movement, but did precisely the opposite – they hurt the movement. The party leadership had to recognize that the slogan of the partisan warfare meant practically a legalization of the forbidden agrarian terror. In order to dampen the disfunctional enthusiasm of the "comrades from the province," which the Central Committee itself had awakened, in 1907 the Central Committee made the initiation of partisan actions conditional on the approval of the Oblast Committees.[54] The Central Committee could never bring itself actually to forbid peasant partisan warfare.

The PSR was aware that, despite the intensification of organizational work, the increasing numbers of propaganda cadres, and its militant tactics, it could only reach the relatively small portion of the agrarian population that already had a certain minimum of revolutionary consciousness. In those areas where such consciousness was not to be found, the party always encountered indifference and a marked aversion to parties. The mass of the peasantry did not want to see their needs offered up to the struggles of parties. They brought their complaints (which as rule involved requests for land) not to individual groups but to the Duma, which they saw as the rebirth of the mystical "assembly of the land" (*zemskii sobor)* from medieval Muscovy.[55] To win this "dark people" for the revolutionary cause, it was necessary to have other slogans and another (at least externally "neutral") method of action directed toward the needs of the peasantry. A party was not the best organization to provide the kind of agitation that the peasantry needed.

Thus, in the summer of 1905, the SRs strongly supported the founding of an organization that was not bound to any party and that understood itself as the trade union of the peasantry. The PSR saw the "All Russian Peasant Union" as a welcome complementary organ and the ideal carrier of revolutionary work to the backward parts of the village population. Such a division of labor corresponded to reality, for the Union was unquestionably close to the PSR – despite its formal independence and somewhat less radical objectives. Like the PSR, the Union demanded the expropriation of state and private property of the big landowners and the transfer of property to local organs of self-administration. It also put forward a program similar to that of the PSR in propagating the rebirth of the *obshchina* and thereby the es-

(5 January 1907), pribavlenie, p. 6. Also: Partizanskaia voina i vooruzhennoe vosstanie, in: Trud No. 4 (October 1906), pp. 4–6, PSR Archive 472.

[54] See O.[rganizatsionnoe] B. [iuro] pri Ts.K. P.S.-R.: Circular No. 10 from 23 August 1907, PSR Archive 197, according to a decision of the Central Committee from 16 August (Protokoly zasedanii Ts.K. P.S.-R., PSR Archive 203).

[55] This pre-political attitude of the peasantry can best be seen in their "commissions" to the Duma delegates: See Nakazy deputatam P.S.-R., PSR Archive 52 I–IV. A., Nakazy deputatam s.-r. gruppy, in: Narodnyi golos. Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia i literaturnaia gazeta. No. 1 (13 April 1907), p. 5. A.I. Nil've, Prigovory i nakazy krest'ian vo II gosudarstvennuiu dumu, p. 100 and passim.

tablishment of democratic agrarian socialism.[56] Correspondingly, the great majority of delegates to the founding congress of the All-Russian Peasant Union (which included many members of the PSR) sympathized openly with the neo-populist party. The SD speakers, by contrast, had a difficult time.[57]

Still, despite this closeness, the relationship between the Peasant Union and the PSR did not go according to plan. Instead of just making a show of party neutrality but in reality working directly for the PSR as SR strategists wished, the Central Executive Bureau of the All-Russian Peasant Union insisted upon its autonomy and resisted the proposal that it accept permanent representatives of the central SR Peasant Commission. Although the Union could set limits to the influence of the brother party at the leadership level, it could not prevent the penetration of the grass roots. As the Tsarist state regained its power, this forced all political and union organizations to conspiratorial action, and the SRs gained influence at the local level of the Peasant Union. The TsKK explained this development by claiming that the "weaklings" (i.e., the Kadets) and the "dishonest" (i.e., the Social Democrats) broke ranks and left the field to the party experienced in the underground, the PSR. The All-Russian Peasant Union fell into a "party-neutral" leadership and a "party-bound" grassroots. The Central Executive Bureau could not withstand this pressure for long. As early as March 1906, it had to agree to the establishment of so-called "help-bureaus" of the All-Russian Peasant Union. These "help-bureaus" contained two-thirds SR party members. Despite unexpected difficulties, the PSR was successful in putting the peasant organization under its control. The party was thus able to secure a monopoly of the agitation of the peasants, a position that neither Social Democracy nor any other revolutionary party could seriously endanger.[58]

In light of these rather favorable organizational conditions and the promising political situation, in July 1906 the PSR Central Committee did not limit itself to non-binding appeals to revolutionary spontaneity and the usual, merely verbal summons for a "general revolt of the people." Rather, for the first time it issued concrete orders for party committees to prepare for the revolt. An internal circular explained that the anger sparked by dissolution of the Duma and the echo of the Vyborg Manifesto impelled the PSR Central Committee "to declare open war against the government

[56] See Protokoly delegatskogo soveshchaniia Vserossiiskogo Krest'ianskogo Soiuza, p. 141ff. The Peasant Union took a moderate position above all in the question of compensation for expropriated property and armed revolt. See Perrie, Agrarian policy, p. 107ff.: E.I. Kiriukhina, Vserossiiskii krest'ianskii soiuz v 1905 g., in: IZ Vol. 50 (1955), pp. 95–141.

[57] See Protokoly delegatskogo soveshchaniia, p. 80ff.

[58] See for this history a manuscript in the materials of the first All Russian conference of the socialist revolutionary peasant agitation in September 1906, PSR Archive 122, as well as comments in: Protokoly vtorogo s"ezda PSR 1907, p. 142.

and to begin this war immediately."[59] Under the leadership of the reactivated soviets, the proletariat was to stage a general strike; meanwhile, a revolt of railway workers (whose union was almost entirely in the hands of the PSR) was to prevent the arrival of Tsarist troops and the army. In the case of the latter, the party dared not hope for active support, but at least wanted to ensure their neutrality. In his typical fashion, Chernov explained why the revolution must find its strongest support in the villages. The workers were only able to mount short-term strikes, for they had been exhausted by the many previous attempts and hence were potentially in danger of being starved into submission by a new strike action. The Central Committee wrote that, "all available forces must be moved to the countryside and the peasants must be called to open revolt. All administrative organs in the countryside and at the *volost'* (township) level must be dismissed, driven off, or – in the event of armed resistance – violently destroyed. Rebellious peasants must occupy all installations in the countryside; state property as well as funds ... must be confiscated for the needs of the revolt ... It is essential that the peasant revolt bear the character of an attack and that it not limit itself within the boundaries of individual regions."[60]

The attempt failed completely. The mutiny in the naval ports was suppressed in just a few days,[61] and the rebellion of the peasants did not even begin. There was extensive unrest and numerous acts of violence (above all, in northeastern Ukraine and in the Volga region), but once again coordination and direction were lacking. A report from southern Ukraine noted that the SRs could belatedly seek to take charge of the movement, but that "happened very seldom."[62] If the SDs had suffered defeat with the failure of the general strikes in October and December 1905, the corresponding moment for the SRs came in the summer of 1906. Nothing could raise more serious doubt about the validity of SR strategy and demonstrate more clearly the weakness of party organization than this failure, yet again, of the peasants to rise up.

In September 1906, an all-Russian conference of SR peasant agitators met in Imatra in Finland to seek the exact reasons for the catastrophe.[63] Without exception,

[59] Obrashchenie Tsentral'nogo Komiteta k mestnym komitetam, PSR Archive 168; K partiinym organizatsiiam, citation by Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R. S., p. 248. Also: Derenkovskii, Vseobshchaia stachka, p. 126.

[60] See Protokoly s"ezda krest'ianskikh rabotnikov P.S.-R. v sentiabre 1906 g., PSR Archive 133; Volia No. 90–91 (6 January 1907), pp. 5–11; Citation Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 248. For the role of the railroad men in the revolution: M. B-v [M.I. Bogdanov] Ocherki po istorii zheleznodorozhnykh zabastovok v Rossii. (M. 1906); V.N. Pereverzev, Pervyi vserossiiskii zheleznodorozhnyi soiuz 1905 goda, in: Byloe 1925, No. 4, pp. 36–69, here 65f; Pushkareva, Zheleznodorozhniki, p. 75ff., here p. 236ff.

[61] See below p. 154ff.

[62] Polozhenie del v iugo-zapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482.

[63] See the extensive and very informative materials of this conference in the PSR Archive 122 and 133

the delegates' reports confirmed that the PSR's local committees were simply unprepared for revolt. The local committees were not only organizationally incompetent but did not have sufficient military strength, notwithstanding numerous "fighting brotherhoods." The planned revolt appeared to be so hopeless to the local party leaders that, as a rule, they did not even try to carry out the Central Committees directives. Even in the middle Volga, where peasant unrest was epidemic and the SRs were very popular, the call to arms by the Organizational Committee from late July[64] had no effect. The same happened in Ukraine. An uprising at that time was not regarded as opportune there, because the party organization was believed to be too weak and the peasants were busy cultivating their fields.[65] Only in two provinces could delegates report of preparations for revolt, but even there the results were meager. In Penza the SRs developed a "feverish activity": traveling agents were sent to the villages, "fighting brotherhoods" were organized, and assemblies met. The peasantry was excited, and in many places "it was especially the youth that began to revolt openly, for they believed that the decisive moment was near."[66] But because the SR city organization did not feel ready for a fight and an isolated action in the province appeared to be hopeless, the party was forced to recall agitators from the countryside, to try to dampen the heated emotions, and to defer the revolt for another day. The story was much the same in Voronezh. Here again everyone waited for "somebody to take the lead."[67] But no one did. The state used this time to collect its forces and go on the offensive by sharply attacking the PSR's organizations and "pacifying" the peasantry with punishment expeditions. To add insult to injury, a few weeks later the SRs in Penza learned that the Central Committees instruction did not intend to call for an immediate revolt, but merely issued a warning not to forget the peasant "partisan struggle." The effort and sacrifice were not only futile but also caused by a misunderstanding.

The local delegates were just as open and direct in naming those guilty for the disaster as they were in communicating details of what had happened to the representative of the Central Committee and the representatives of the TsKK. The delegate from Khar'kov maintained that the party leadership must assume responsibility for the misery because, even though it had no idea of the conditions at the grass roots,

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as well as an official report on the negotiations: Izveshchenie o sostoiavshemsia s"ezde krest'ianskikh rabotnikov Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 12–14 (Originals in PSR Archive 485 and 691).

[64] See Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia. Nachalo obrazovaniia P.O. organizatsii, PSR Archive 468, p. 264; Rezoliutsii IV-go oblastn. s"ezda P.O. P.S.-R. (1 to 4 July 1906), PSR Archive 468, p. 6.

[65] Polozhenie del v iugo-zapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482.

[66] Penzenskaia guberniia. February 1907, PSR Archive 471. See also: Otchet Penzenskoi gubernii, PSR Archive 122; also: Povolzhskaia oblastn. organizatsiia, PSR Archive 468.

[67] Voronezhskii komitet. Doklad na s"ezd krest'ianskikh rabotnikov., PSR Archive 122.

it had nevertheless issued an unworkable and therefore false directive. The Central Committee representative, probably Chernov, resisted such accusations with utmost energy. He accused the local organizations of failing at the decisive moment and of not following a directive that was in fact appropriate to the situation. The question of guilt may have been unclear, but the argumentation of the party leadership – which measured the correctness of a tactical decision solely based on its capacity for realization – is very convincing.[68]

Nor could the conference delegates agree on a further strategy for the peasant revolution. The supporters of extreme militancy insisted that the village population was still willing to fight for "Land and Freedom," especially after the dissolution of the Duma. Because it was the party and not the peasantry that had failed, an armed revolt was thus "unavoidable." One could not, of course, predict the exact timing of the revolt, but it was absolutely necessary to prepare the ground by the direct development of a "partisan struggle on a broad front" and by means of increased terrorist activities. In short, the party should not be led astray from the defeat that had just occurred. After analyzing the causes of defeat, the extremists recommended that the party continue with its old tactics. Even the proponents of a "more moderate" policy assumed that the peasantry was still in complete possession of "revolutionary energy." But the moderates tried to learn the lessons of the summer and emphasized the need to find "forms of organized struggle" and thereby prevent the "the danger of a fruitless expenditure of the people's energy." Once again in the history of the PSR, proponents of a blanquist politics of revolution at any price opposed those who called for a reasonable tactic based on planning and organization. The success of the radical position in the fall of 1906[69] demonstrated – better than the Central Committee instruction from July – that an irrational courage of desperation had overtaken the PSR. As the end of the revolution became increasingly apparent, the party was more than ever infected by the Maximalist logic of "now or never."

The fate of SR peasant agitation proved that the skeptics among conference participants were right. Peasant unrest did continue until the fall of 1906 and the spring

[68] Protokoly s"ezda krest'ianskikh rabotnikov P.S.-R., PSR Archive 133.

[69] With 17 to 14 votes. The delegates from St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Vologda, Moscow, Vladimir, Tver', Smolensk, Simbirsk, Kazan', Stavropol', Ekaterinodar as well as those of the Urals and the Caucasus, i.e. the committees from central Russia, White Russia and the Urals, voted for the majority resolution. The representatives from Arkhangel'sk, Petrozavodsk, Orel, Voronezh, Kiev, Saratov, Penza, Tambov, Simferopol' as well as those from the northern Oblast, from southern Russia, the Black Sea region and the TsKK voted for the minority resolution. Thus the warning to be careful came from those regions in which peasant unrest was strongest, i.e. in the central agricultural region and the middle Volga. See Izveshchenie o sostoiavshemsia s"ezde Krest'ianskikh rabotnikov Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, in: PI No. 1, p. 12–14. An official article in the central party paper also called for caution: P. Nov-tsev, K voprosu o nashei taktike v Krest'ianskom dvizhenii, in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 14–18. This article apparently was intended to oppose the conference decisions.

of 1907. This unrest led several committees in Ukraine and the Volga region to continue making senseless appeals for revolt. In April 1907, a Ukrainian oblast conference even approved a so-called "partial revolt" (which was forbidden by the Central Committee) – that is, regionally limited, isolated attempts at insurrection without the support of parallel actions in all of Russia.[70]

In Voronezh the local party was also active and thereby caused the arrest of several thousand peasants.[71] Such actions, however, remained isolated. They were more desperate attempts to save what was already lost than expressions of actual strength. Even though the SR leadership inclined toward unrealistic optimism, in the end it had to admit that the agrarian revolution had failed. When the Tsar prematurely dissolved the second Duma on 3 June 1907 (and changed the electoral law to ensure an obedient "representative of the people"), the Central Committee did not give serious thought to mounting armed resistance. The third party congress convened at the beginning of July to discuss the situation and naturally protested, with the usual sharpness, against this new dishonesty of the monarch. But the party could do practically nothing against it. The reports of the delegates were almost unanimous in stating that the mood of the country was "low" or at best "mixed." Even in those areas, for example in south Russia or in St. Petersburg, where outrage drove the masses in the streets, sufficient organizational structures were simply not available to direct the unrest.[72] The party congress confirmed what the Central Committee had previously stated: "one cannot not call for revolt."[73] When the SR leadership nevertheless tried to organize an open struggle against the state by partially lifting the ban against isolated uprisings,[74] it did so without any serious hope of success and only because it appeared better to attempt a hopeless protest than none at all.

An investigation of the peasantry made toward the end of 1907 made it quite clear that the opportunity to overthrow the autocracy had, at least for the moment, been lost. This investigation did support the SR thesis that the state and the noble landowners were hated by the peasants; that the trust in the tsar, which for centuries had been the main support of social stability in the countryside and which had mod-

[70] See Oblastnoi ukrainskii s"ezd P.S.-R. (27 to 28 April [1907]); Rezoliutsii oblastnogo Ukrainskogo s"ezda 29-30 iiunia 1907 g; Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainskoi oblasti; all: PSR Archive 482. See also: Izveshchenie o gubernskom s"ezde Penzenskogo Krest'ianskogo Soiuza P.S.-R., October 1906; PSR Archive 471.

[71] See N.D. Avksent'ev's ("Vronskii") reprimand at the London all-party conference of the PSR: Protokoly 1908, p. 103.

[72] Materialy III-go Soveta Partii [S.-R.] 8 to 11 July 1907, PSR Archive 679. Also: Iz materialov [III-go] soveta P.S.-R., in: ZT No. 4 (30 August 1907), pp. 13–14; Izveshchenie o 3-m Sobranii Soveta Partii. SPb. 8 July [1907].

[73] Protokoly sobranii Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R., undated meeting before 1 June 1907, PSR Archive 203, as well as a circular of the Organization Bureau, PSR Archive 197.

[74] See the resolution of the 3rd Party Council in: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 68.

erated (even if not preventing) agrarian unrest, was now at a low point; and that the number of "conscious" peasants had increased. Still, the investigation also demonstrated that it was even less possible than before to speak of a homogeneous political attitude on the part of the agrarian population. Rather, the investigation revealed that the village hardly possessed any party organizations and, still worse, that the peasantry had lost hope in the revolution. For example, a report from Tambov province declared that "the majority hangs its head and hopes for nothing".[75] The revolution had come to a dead end.

One can summarize the causes of the failure of SR agitation among peasants by citing the following factors:

1. Although it may have been true that many rebellious peasants sympathized with the PSR, this certainly did not mean that they were convinced Socialist Revolutionaries or even active party members. At best, their loyalty was superficial and their engagement short lived. They were not at all concerned with the complex contents of SR theory. And, as a thoughtful propagandist pointed out, the peasants understood the demand for socialization of the land like the Maximalists in a narrowly syndicalist sense or even as a promise of property.[76] Hence it is only with great reservations that one can speak of political consciousness in the peasantry. 2. In any event, neopopulist and revolutionary propaganda reached only a relatively small portion of the peasantry. The success of this propaganda depended not only on socio-economic status but also, in no small degree, on the age of the agrarian public. As was reported from Ukraine, it was above all the agrarian youth that readily accepted SR ideas. Among the middle-aged, it appealed only to those who had experienced the Russo-Japanese War as reservists. The older peasants were completely conservative and, as always, believed totally in the Tsar and regarded any rebellion as an offense against the God-given order. The report did emphasize that the middle generation, which determined the political attitudes of the village, had been freed of its deeply rooted constitutional illusions by the dissolution of the first Duma and was now engaging in spontaneous action. But the report also noted that even these relatively "conscious" peasants at first blamed the delegates, not the government. It was only the Vyborg Manifesto that made it clear to the peasants who was the real destroyer of the rep-

[75] Tambovskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 799. The evaluation of this investigation by, I. Ritina [I.I. Rakitnikov], Iz materialov krest'ianskoi ankety, in: ZT No. 26 (February 1910), pp. 4–12 and No. 27 (April 1910), pp. 13–19 was very selective and much to optimistic.

[76] This observer was of the opinion that, "in the village we have to date ... appealed not so much to the 'conscious' sotsialist revolutionary peasant but rather to potential Maximalists; among these we can note the tendency to understand the socialization of the land as: the land to the farmers and the factories to the workers." (Protokoly zasedanii oblastnogo soveshchaniia Severo-Zapadnoi Oblasti. 11 to 13 November 1907, PSR Archive 426.)

resentative of the people.[77] When the authors saw this as a success of revolutionary agitation, their optimistic judgment obviously clashed with the real inability of the PSR to call for a revolt. 3. The local committees were simply not prepared for an armed revolt. That was due, first and foremost, to the chronic lack of qualified revolutionaries. But a delegate from the Volga oblast to the conference of the SR peasant agitators in Imatra pointed out that a further shortcoming was the distinct "disproportion of the party forces between the city and the countryside."[78] Although the SRs saw the politicization of the village population as their principal objective, very few dedicated themselves to this task.[79] The characteristics of Russia's socio-economic structure were reflected in this situation. The PSR's work among the peasantry was decisively hindered by the enormity of the province, the underdeveloped communications, and the contradiction between the urban and agrarian sector as well as the manifestations of the economic and social backwardness. 4. The cooperation between the party leadership and the grassroots was very poor. Given the immediate situation, one might understand why the Central Committee made such an important decision in July 1906 without consulting a representative body of the party as a whole (for example, the party congress). But that it so obviously overestimated the capabilities of the local committees allows one to conclude that the PSR had serious organizational weaknesses.[80]

5.4. A Failed Putsch: SR Agitation in the Army

No revolution can be victorious if it fails to win the support, or at least neutralize, the army. Another option is for the revolution to build its own military force equal to that of the armed forces of the state. Chernov was the first to recognize this basic fact. He saw the importance of the armed forces not so much in their weaponry as in their "outstanding organization." He calculated that the soldiers and the sailors could carry discipline and order into the "general peoples' revolt." They could direct the spontaneity of the masses and help the elementary outbreak of violence to become efficient. For Chernov, the best case for the revolution would be a simultaneous mass revolt in the city and village, together with a well-planned putsch by the "conscious" parts of the army.[81]

[77] See Polozhenie del v iugo-zapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482.

[78] Protokoly s"ezda Krest'ianskikh rabotnikov, PSR Archive 133; Kratkie zamechaniia po voprosam ob organizatsii krest'ian i krest'ianskikh rabotnikov P.S.-R., PSR Archive 122.

[79] See Perrie, Social Composition, p. 246, Tab.17 which shows that the majority of Socialist Revolutionaries preferred to participate in terrorist actions.

[80] See below, p. 179ff., p. 289ff.

[81] [V.M. Chernov], Voisko i revoliutsiia, in: RR No. 21 (1 April 1903), pp. 1–3. also in Sbornik statei Antonova et.al., p. 337–344. See also: K voprosu o voennykh vosstaniiakh i podgotovke k nim. [no

Even though the PSR regarded agitation among soldiers and sailors as a key to the overthrow of the autocracy, in fact it did relatively little. In the great majority of the SR local organizations, "army work" held a very low priority, even during the revolution. Only a few of the larger committees replied to queries from the Central Committees Organizations Bureau in February 1907 and claimed to have conducted "systematic" propaganda in the garrisons. They seldom reported that a special commission existed for this type of activity.[82] Such special departments were most common in the important ports of the imperial tsarist navy, for the disgruntled sailors offered SRs especially fruitful opportunities for agitation. In the naval bases of the Baltics, the Black See, Kronstadt, Sveaborg, Reval (Tallinn), and Sevastopol', the PSR worked very hard to infiltrate the armed forces with revolutionary cells.[83] The Central Committee supported this work with very large sums. Just how large this financial support was can be seen by the fact that the "Army Organization" of the St.Petersburg military region had a larger budget than the oblast committee of north Russia and the committee of the large cities combined.[84]

The PSR's agitation among soldiers and sailors was different from that among other sections of the population not only because it began later, but also because of its special position in the party organization. From the very beginning SR agitation in the military was strictly directed and coordinated from above by a "Central Military Bureau" (*Tsentral'noe Voennoe Biuro*, or TsVB), which bore the principal authority for all matters relating to military agitation. It could use the available resources under its authority at will and did not require the approval of the Organization Bureau or local committees. It also had its own treasury. This financial independence, above all, contributed to the increasing inability of the Central Committee and the local leadership to exercise effective control over the Military Organization. This was the source of much complaint within the party. The independence of the Military Organization was due largely to the work of one man, S.F. Mikhalevich. He was an old Narodnik and veteran of Siberian exile; he directed virtually all the SR propaganda activities in the army and fleet.[85] Without question, however, the most important reason for the extreme centralization and independence of the Military Organization was the special condition under which agitation had to be conducted in the military. This work was confined to just a few cities, required an exception-

date, approx. 1905–06], PSR Archive 666.

[82] See Note 46 of this chapter for the OB's investigation.

[83] "Voennye komissii" existed also in Nizhnii-Novgorod, Ekaterinoslav, Kazan', Moscow, Kursk, Tver', Voronezh, Irkutsk, Tiflis and naturally also in St. Petersburg.

[84] See Chastnoe soveshchanie Ts.K.-ta i grupp voennykh rabotnikov iz Iuzhnoi, Ukrainskoi obl., Peterburgskogo okruga i Finliandii. November 1907, PSR Archive 700; Protokoly 1908, p. 60.

[85] Pseudonym "Ian". See for his biography: "Ian", in: Za narod. Izd. Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R., No. 54 (March 1913), pp. 4–7.

ally high degree of conspiratorial caution, and accordingly had its own specialized methods of work.

Toward the end of June 1906, Mikhalevich convened the first conference of military agitators in Terioki (Finland). The debates at this conference showed that, even at the apogee of the revolution, the PSR lacked a unified conception for its military activities. A report from Penza claimed that the "tendency toward party neutrality was very strong" and therefore suggested that the party's propaganda presented without a specific SR line. The Penza delegate went so far as to mention that the possibility of cooperation with SDs should not be rejected out of hand. However, the delegate from Moscow was applauded when he called such a strategy simply "unthinkable." There was no middle ground between these two positions; nor did a vote lead to a decision. Thus, one of the most important questions of revolutionary tactics in the area of military policy had to be remanded to local organizations for further consultations because it was "insufficiently thought-out."[86]

In the course of exhaustive discussions, the conference was able to achieve a consensus on the question of "military terror." The majority of delegates concurred that the assassination of officers, generals, and other hated oppressors of the soldiers had to be "very carefully" organized. Minor, a representative of the Central Committee, maintained that the party should "only then" use these means when "the entire population understands." Rakitnikov agreed, noting that military terror was only an act of revenge and as such not approved by the party. But the critical question of the Moscow delegate remained unanswered. If the soldier was "one of the people," he asked, why could not the PSR fight against the "martinets" with the same weapons as against the "oppressors of the people." Although the final vote approved the tactical line of the party, the remarkably large number of opposition votes showed that a significant portion of the conference participants did not accept this argument. Evidently, the rejection of military terror appeared to them as measuring the suffering of the soldiers with a different yardstick.

It was no accident that this first conference of SR military agitators convened when the dissolution of the first Duma was already close at hand. Indeed, the conference was intended to muster the PSR's military forces and evaluate the strength of the party in the event an armed revolt did break out. The reports of local delegates presented a rather bleak picture. Mikhalevich summarized these reports thus: "The moment is not ripe for a revolt. Only parts [of the army] are ready. If we attack

[86] See for this conference from 29 June 1906 the protocol notes in PSR Archive 700. Aside from the Central Committee eleven socialist revolutionary committees were represented at this conference. Ten delegates voted for and eleven against an "inter-party" form of agitation. See further: Rezoliutsii soveshchaniia predstavitelei voennykh organizatsii P.S.-R., in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 11–12, as well as Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 258f., who was well informed about the socialist revolutionary activities in the army.

now it will only end in a defeat."[87] However, delegates from Penza and Sevastopol' judged the situation differently and pointed to the many spontaneous protest actions in the whole country. In their opinion, such tension in the country meant that a rising could only be held off "with great effort." Several Central Committee representatives even wanted to set a firm date for final assault on the last bastions of autocracy. With regard to the correlation of forces in the army, however, even the optimists had no doubts concerning the correctness of Mikhalevich's cautious judgment. Consequently, a final resolution directed SR committees to place themselves at the head of spontaneous uprisings, but simultaneously advised them not to provoke insurrection or to plan isolated actions.

Despite the depressing situation reports of military agitators, the PSR leadership was not deterred and continued to plan for a centrally organized revolt. This revolt was to be concentrated in Kronstadt and Sveaborg. The party leadership assumed "that the occupation of coastal fortifications in the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Fleet would make it possible completely to disarm and occupy St. Petersburg" and that taking the capital "would at the same time mean the victory of the armed rising". Chernov held this to be "at first glance indeed a simple and correct" strategy.[88]

Mikhalevich was given the task of preparing this action. He was already head of SR military agitation in Kronstadt and had assembled there a large number of talented propagandists. A garrison committee served as a bridgehead for their actions. This committee was composed of representatives of the revolutionary soldiers and sailors in the separate companies and ships crews. In June 1906, the PSR and the RSDRP each sent five members to this committee. One SR witness reported that such dissatisfaction was present in the lower ranks of the navy that one awaited hourly the outbreak of armed acts of violence. There were even conflicts between the sailors and SRs in the military committee when sailors insisted on the immediate murder of the officers – i.e., military terror, which was contrary to official PSR tactics.[89] The explosive situation even forced the Bolsheviks to revise their initial categorical rejection of a revolt. Once they had accused the SRs of being unconscionable "conspirators" and wanting to "jump into an irresponsible adventure" and "leading the

[87] Conference of the socialist revolutionary army agitators from 29 June 1906, PSR Archive 700. At about this time the PSR began publishing a special paper for the army: Soldatskaia gazeta. Izd. Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R. Paris, No. 1–7 (1906–07), continued as: Za narod. Paris No. 1–60 (2 April–May 1914). A collection of socialist revolutionary agitation literature for soldiers and sailors can be found in PSR Archive 184; see also: Voennyi Listok. Izd. Tavricheskogo Soiuza P.S.-R. No. 4–10 (1 September 1906–1 March 1907), No. 14–16 (1 May 1907–4 June 1907), PSR Archive 546/II.

[88] Viktor Voennyi [V.M. Chernov], K voprosu o prichinakh neudach voennykh vosstanii, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 2 (1910), pp. 195–226, here p. 201.

[89] See N. Egorov, Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie. Rasskaz uchastnika, in: Byloe No. 4 (26) October 1917, pp. 90–99.

people into disaster."[90] Now, after a special meeting of the St. Petersburg RSDRP committee, the Bolsheviks were prepared "to participate as actively as possible in the leadership of the movement."[91]

However, as in the attempted insurrection of December 1905, the second attempt at a revolutionary, armed revolt failed. The mine sweepers in Sveaborg did give the start signal for the rising by refusing to make preparations so as to prevent warships whose crews had mutinied from entering the harbor. And the red flag of the rebels did fly over Sveaborg's most important fortifications on 18 July 1906. A day and a half later, however, the government was again master of the situation. On 20 July the rebels had to yield to the cannons of an armored cruiser that remained loyal to the tsar. The unrest in Kronstadt ran a different course. As the news of the events in Sveaborg arrived, the preparations were still not complete. Instead of acting, the would-be revolutionaries engaged in hectic discussions over the risks of a putsch. Because they had no choice, the sailors of one garrison revolted in the night of 19/20 July. The revolutionary strategists had set great hopes on just this garrison. As in Sveaborg, the sailors were so poorly armed and organized, and so hopelessly inferior in numbers to the troops loyal to the government, that the rebels capitulated the very next morning. At the same time a mutiny in the armored cruiser *Pamiat' Azova* was suppressed even before it really began.[92] Because the revolt remained isolated and the revolutionaries could not coordinate their actions and because, as Chernov later analyzed, "a strategic plan" and "central leadership" were lacking, the autocracy won an easy and fast victory.[93]

What the SRs learned from these events was the imperative of increasing the numbers in the military to whom they addressed agitation. According to Mikhale-

[90] See the perhaps most informative report from a witness: Dasha [Iu. Ziubelevich], Kronshtadt v 1906 godu. (Vospominaniia revoliutsionerki). Vols. 1–3, Kronstadt (no publishing year given). Vol .3, p. 20, citation according to Spiridovich, Partiia S.-r., p. 263.

[91] So Lenin's instruction according to L. Bogutskaia, Ocherki po istorii vooruzhennykh vosstanii v revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. (M. 1956), p. 1905. See also: Voenno-boevaia rabota partii bol'shevikov 1903–1917 gg. Pod obshchei red. N.R. Pankratova (M. 1973), p. 125ff.; Derenkovskii, Vseobshchaia stachka, p. 127ff.

[92] See Viktor Voennyi, K voprosu o prichinakh, p. 201f; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 260ff.; further: I.V. Egorov, Vosstaniia v Baltiiskom flote v 1905–1906 gg. v Kronshtadte, Sveaborge i na korable 'Pamiat'' Azova', Sbornik statei. (Leningrad, 1926); F. Kogan, Kronshtadt v 1905–06 gg. (M. 1926); I. Kogan, Sveaborgskoe vosstanie 18–20 iiunia 1906 g., (M. 1927); V.N. Sokolov, Sveaborg. Voennoe vosstanie v 1906 godu (M. 1933).

[93] Viktor Voennyi, K voprosu o prichinakh neudach, p. 203. Most of the reports from socialist revolutionary eye witnesses to the revolt in Sveaborg came to a similar judgment (PSR Archive 681/I). A participant saw the cause of the failure in "that the rising began spontaneously and that they [the sailors, M.H.] could not reign their hate." On the other hand the indecisiveness of the Social Democrats was made responsible and it was maintained: "If the socialdemocratic Central Committee had not put the brake on this tactic [of revolt, M.H.] and if it had been really revolutionary then the revolt would have ended differently."

vich, the objective of the work could not yet be an appeal to conscious revolutionaries, but merely the general politicization of the armed forces. Working on a "broad front" should take precedence over trying to "deepen" the party's hold on soldiers and sailors. Only thus could the party influence the officer corps. Moreover, the failed revolt had proven that, without the cooperation of the officer corps, the actions of troops inspired by revolution could not succeed. In the fall of 1906, Mikhalevich founded the "All Russian Union of Officers" (*Vserossiiskii ofitserskii soiuz*) as an instrument of this strategy that was involuntarily "non-party" and largely legal. This new organization held its first conference in December, and a short time later Mikhalevich founded the "All-Russian Non-Party Union of Soldiers and Sailors" (*Vserossiiskii bespartiinyi soiuz soldatov i matrosov*).[94] Both organizations were, for all intents and purposes, controlled by the PSR. The Central Committee agreed to the neutral facade only on the strict condition that the "presence of other parties" be prevented.[95] Consequently, the significant financial resources of the Union, which were primarily invested in publishing, came from the central PSR treasury.[96] Very soon, however, it became evident that "non-party" methods of agitation had significant disadvantages and hence new methods had to be found.

In response to the dissolution of the second Duma, the third party congress in July 1907 ordered a complete change of tactics in military agitation. Although party leaders had come to the conclusion that the peasantry would not rise against this injustice, they still did not want to simply accept the tsarist coup d'état. Thus, great efforts were made to organize a revolt. And since the initiative for such a revolt could only come from the army, the party congress decided to break with the old tactics and to approve and encourage both isolated putsch attempts and mutinies in individual military units. A programmatic article justified this unexpected change: "The so-called 'partial revolts' are unavoidable in the military. If the uprisings cannot be organized, they will simply break out spontaneously and with worse results and perhaps even with greater losses."[97] Although many argued strongly for a sensi-

[94] See "Ian", in: Za narod No. 54 (March 1913), pp. 5–6; Pervyi s"ezd Vserossiiskogo Ofitserskogo Soiuza, in: PI No. 4 (5 January 1907) pribavlenie, p. 2; Ob ofitserskom soiuze i o rabote sredi ofitserov, PSR Archive 456; Proekt programmy Ofitserskogo Soiuza, in: Volia No. 92 (13 January 1907), pp. 15–16. Ustav Vserossiiskogo Soiuza Soldat i Matrosov, PSR Archive 700. Two statutes of a "military organization" also argued for "party neutrality" in: PI No. 7 (30 March 1907), pp. 10–11; Volia No. 95 (21 January 1907), pp. 14–15. See further: S. Mstislavskii, Iz istorii voennogo dvizheniia (Po lichnym vospominaniiam). "Ofitserskii" i "Boevoi" Soiuzy. 1906–1908 gg., in: KiS No. 6 (55) 1929, pp. 7–31. The author was publisher of the officers union paper: Voennyi Soiuz. Organ severnogo organizatsionnogo komiteta Ofitserskogo Soiuza. SPb. No. 1–2 (December 1906), continued as: Narodnaia Armiia. Izd. Vserossiiskogo Ofitserskogo Soiuza. SPb. No. 1–7 (1907).

[95] So the representative of the Organization Bureau at a conference of military agitators in Moscow, February 1907: Protokoly Moskovskogo s"ezda voennykh rabotnikov, PSR Archive 700.

[96] Mstislavskii, Iz istorii voennogo dvizheniia, p. 20.

[97] Chto zhe teper'?, in: ZT No. 1 (1 July 1907), p. 11.

ble policy[98] of supporting but not initiating individual action, the final resolution had a decisively militant tone, stating clearly that "the strengthening of ... work in this area [army agitation] should not be afraid of individual armed action in those cases where the revolutionary spirit of the soldiers is such that spontaneous uprisings can be expected and where organization and well thought out plans offer serious hope that success can be achieved even if that success can only be local and temporary."[99] The party congress was conscious of the risk of defeat. In fact, it in effect provoked defeat, since the tide of the revolutionary movement had already ebbed in the summer of 1906.

If in its blindness and unrealistic optimism the SR leaders intended to overcome the problems of the current situation by simply changing tactics, they soon had to pay the price for their denial of reality. Despite the overwhelming and almost unanimous enthusiasm with which the party grassroots greeted the new freedom of action, all attempts to use this freedom ended in fiasco and caused much harm. For example, the uprising in June 1907 by a sapper unit in Kiev was strongly inspired by the SRs and the dissolution of the second Duma. The revolt was crushed within a few hours. A critical internal party report analyzing the failure of the revolt noted that, once again, there was no "plan worked out for a revolt" and that the unit, in its spontaneous anger, had simply "forgotten" the limits of its own strength and wanted only to "strike back and make the government answer for its action."[100] The situation was much the same for a rebellion in Vladivostok in October, although the rebels here were much more numerous and able to cause unrest for a couple of days.[101]

The rising in Sevastopol' in September 1907 deserves our attention, since it was planned with the direct participation of the PSR Central Committee. Thus the Sevastopol' rising can be regarded as an example of SR military agitation and tactics in the final phase of the revolution. A representative from the Central Military Bureau described the course of the revolt.[102] Following the decisions of the third party congress, the Central Committee gave him a general "carte blanche" for local uprisings. The same organ also authorized him "to prepare" the strategically important

[98] See Materialy III-go soveta partii (8–11 July 1907), PSR Archive 679; similar: Protokoly konferentsii voennykh rabotnikov Baltiiskogo flota. 31 July 1907, PSR Archive 700.

[99] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 68.

[100] See Vosstanie saper v Kieve 1907 g., PSR Archive 83.

[101] For this see Izvlechenie iz doklada Ts.K.-tu PSR o Vladivostokskom vosstanii v oktiabre 1907 goda. PSR Archive 171; S.E. Lifshits, Voennoe vosstanie vo Vladivostoke 16–17 oktiabrja 1907 g., in: KiS 20 (1925), pp. 102–122.

[102] For the following see Dokladnaia zapiska Tsentral'nomu Komitetu PSR o popytke k vooruzhennomu vystupleniiu v Sevastopole v sentiabre 1907 g., PSR Archive 553/II. Further Aleksandrov, Dva narodnykh geroia, in: Za Narod No. 36 (January 1910), pp. 9–12; Sevastopol'skie geroi, in: Za Narod No. 41 (july 1911), pp. 5–7; Maksimov, Popytka vosstaniia v Sevastopole v noch s 14 na 15 sentiabria 1907 goda (Vospominaniia ofitsera, in: Byloe 3 (25) September 1917, pp. 15–32.

naval port in the Black Sea for an "individual rising." The emissary of the party leadership, probably G.I. Glinskii,[103] discovered that the SR committee from Sevastopol' was at odds with the local Fighting Brotherhood after the latter had already called for rebellion. The committee, however, held to the only party line that it knew – namely, the ban on isolated action. The Central Committee representative organized a committee to prepare for the revolt. This committee consisted of members from the Fighting Brotherhood, and the Central Military Bureau gave it sole authority "to raise the banner of revolt" when the situation seemed right. The committee insisted upon its plans and organized a mutiny in the garrisons. And it did so in the face of unified resistance from the local party leadership, the SR workers' union from Sevastopol', and the Central Committee[104] representative in the Oblast Committee for south Russia, all of whom regarded the revision of the old strategy as irresponsible. The opposition turned to the Central Committee and asked for instructions. But when three more delegates of the Central Military Bureau appeared in Sevastopol', all holding special authority from the Central Committee, the request of the opposition lost its purpose and the rebels now had a free hand. Two SR officers from Odessa functioned as strategic advisers and predicted that the attempt would end in total defeat. The workers' union and the local party committee refused to render any assistance; reports on the morale of the troops were not optimistic. But the preparation committee was not to be held back. On the advice of the delegates from the party leadership, who alone made up more than half the votes, the committee decided to risk a rebellion. The report on the rebellion explained that, given the alternative of not using the "relatively [!] revolutionary attitude" or literally "going for broke," the committee decided on the latter. As predicted, the uprising was crushed before it even got started.

For those who had seen the disaster coming but were prevented by the Central Committee from hindering this unhappy outcome, there was nothing left to do but to protest with the greatest possible energy and to point out the consequences of the catastrophe: "a terrible demoralization," arrests, and the bitter hostility of soldiers toward the PSR. The opponents complained that the organization lay in ruins and that the party must make a "completely new" beginning. The party leadership alone was responsible for this situation: "the representatives of the Central Military Bureau and the other representatives" did very little to prepare the "ideological and practical" foundation for the rebellion; it was "poorly informed about the attitudes of the mass of soldiers"; it did nothing "to acquaint itself with the soldiers attitudes"; and "no organizational work among the soldiers" was done and the "masses" in the garrisons "were not organized". Furthermore, the Sevastopol' committee emphasized that the

[103] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 398. On Glinskii: Pis'ma G.I. Glinskogo, PSR Archive, pp. 702–704.
[104] For this institution see below p. 192f.

Central Committee had pressed for rebellion against the will of the local committee and against the spirit of party statutes. In the end the party leadership had to be reminded once again of a revolutionary truism that the PSR had followed until July 1907: An armed revolt could develop only "in an atmosphere of intensive class struggle" and "could not be called forth arbitrarily on the initiative of individual groups or organizations." What had just occurred was held to be a "gross violation of the principles of the socialist struggle and the basis of party tactics."[105]

A conference of "military workers" held in November 1907 had the task of summarizing the experience gained from the attempts at rebellion since July 1907. It might perhaps be more correct to say that the conference had the task of picking up the shards of SR agitation in the army and fleet. The results of its investigations confirmed the analysis of the Sevastopol' committee. Once again the conference complained about a miserable situation that had already been the subject of complaint a year earlier (after the debacle in Kronstadt). Namely, this included an exaggeration of the revolutionary engagement of the masses, a lack of initiative, "a low intellectual" and "moral level" of responsible party members, serious defects in propaganda activities in the army, and (last but not least) "deficiencies of party organization in general" (such as "the isolation of the center"). Conference participants found the reasons for failure not only in their own weakness but also in the deficiencies in the entire party structure and the organization of party work.[106]

The PSR's Organization Bureau also learned from the failed revolts that unsuccessful agitation was largely attributable to poor organization. It had always regarded the special status of the Central Military Bureau as a mistake. Hence it concluded now was the time to rectify this mistake and eliminate that organ. The Organization Bureau claimed that army agitators made their own local organizations and had removed themselves from the control of the local committees. This led to irresponsible

[105] Doklad o vooruzhennom vosstanii, PSR Archive 553/II. The critique of the Central Committee's actions was especially sharp during the fifth party council in May 1909. A delegate criticized the Central Committee for having sent an "incompetent representative" to Sevastopol' and having "made a very big mistake" by approving such a "stupid" enterprise. The Central Committee member N.D. Avksent'ev claimed that the representative was the guilty part because he had only received the order to examine the situation but not to start a revolt. Chernov – as he had already done at the London conference of the PSR in August 1908 – rejected the accusations coming from Sevastopol' as being exaggerated. See Stenograficheskie otchety 11-go zas. V-go soveta P.S.-R. (6 May 1909), PSR Archive 792, pp. 17–20; Protokoly 1908, p. 63.

[106] Soveshchanie TsK-ta s gruppoi voennykh rabotnikov (November 1907), PSR Archive 758/6 (identical with: Chastnoe soveshchanie TsK-ta i gruppy voennykh rabotnikov ..., PSR Archive 700); see also a letter from 15 November 1907, PSR Archive 200. Other conferences during the second half of 1907 also came to the conclusion that the condition of socialist revolutionary agitation of the military was unsatisfactory. See Protokoly konferentsii voennykh rabotnikov Baltiiskogo flota (31 July 1907); Chastnoe soveshchanie predstavitelei Vyborgskoi, Peterburgskoi, Kronshtadtskoi i Revel'skoi Voennykh Organizatsii P.S.-R. (2 August 1907); Chastnoe soveshchanie voennykh rabotnikov (7 October 1907) and further documents in PSR Archive 700.

independence and conflicts, especially because the financially autonomous Central Military Bureau did not coordinate its actions with the party center and consciously promoted the "ideology of the autonomy of military initiatives." The delegates proposed that the military bureau, as in the case of agitation among workers and peasants, should be attached to the Organization Bureau and that the local committees should be made responsible for military propagandists. Although the authority of the local committees was expressly limited to general party affairs (thus guaranteeing broad autonomy for military agitators), the great majority of conference participants did not accept these plans. Instead, they insisted on its special status (a position contrary to their complaints about the lack of coordination between party organizations) and even demanded their own formally separate, democratically elected organization. The Organization Bureau did not give up and succeeded in having its resolution accepted.[107]

The conference also thoroughly revised SR work in the army. It now decided to allow the previously forbidden "military terror" as "one of the means of revolutionary struggle against the worst and most dangerous representatives of the tsarist state."[108] Objections that such acts of violence would endanger the already weak revolutionary cells in the army evoked the counter-argument that terror "teaches initiative" and will break through the "hypnosis of discipline." Certainly the delegates did not dare to entrust the decision for attacks to soldiers but rather gave this authority to the local committees and, when practicable, to the Oblast committees. Although this was an attempt to prevent blind and politically senseless terror, the approval of violent methods did show that the PSR still hoped to improve the negative balance of its military agitation through greater militancy.

At the same time, an attempt was made to make better use of the limited resources at hand. The conference participants had no doubts that the experiment of legal "party neutral" work with the soldiers and sailors had failed. It was clear to all that propagating a broad democratic program with a demand to convene a Constituent Assembly and guarantee civil rights could achieve a diffuse politicization, but it could not create revolutionary engagement. A delegate warned that the destructive consequences of such activity were greater than its advantages; namely the "short-lived organizations which disappear after arrests; the spontaneity of the movement resulting in a loss of control and direction by the party and the discouragement after defeats." The same speaker then characterized the military agitation of Social

[107] Soveshchanie CK-ta s gruppoi voennykh rabotnikov, PSR Archive 758/6. This action of the party leadership caused excited debates at the fifth party council in 1909 and the Central Committee was accused of liquidating the TsVB in an "authoritarian" coup. See Stenogr. otch. 11-go zas. V-go soveta, PSR Archive 792; p. 19

[108] See the definition in: Protokoly Moskovskogo s"ezda voennykh rabotnikov (1 February 1907), PSR Archive 700.

Democrats. The comparison was not very flattering for SRs, for the SDs tried "to appeal to the conscious party groups in mass of soldiers," and hence "their work goes deep." Therefore "the work among the soldiers does not stop even when the social democratic party organization suffers," but rather is "carried on by the soldiers themselves."[109] On the basis of this insight, in the fall of 1907 SR propagandists in the army began to communicate only information that had a specifically and recognizably SR content.[110] "Deepnsess" and the recruiting of conscious cadres was now to replace working "on a broad front." The party wanted fewer but better revolutionaries. Chernov agreed with this new policy; as he later said, the decisive reason for the failure of armed uprisings in 1905–1907 had been the lack of knowledge about the participants. As men of the word, as theoreticians and as intellectuals without military experience (and this charge was directed against the PSR), the revolutionaries had shown themselves to be incapable of giving the unrest a planned direction and orderly, disciplined leadership. Looking to the future, Chernov summarized his critical review by maintaining that "one must organize a revolt."[111] Unfortunately, by 1907 it was already too late to take this new doctrine to heart and to test the new form of concentrated agitation, for revolutionary work in the army in any form had become virtually impossible.

5.5. Principled Boycott: The PSR Position on the State Duma

As the party that propagated the immediate socialist revolution and pursued the most militant tactic among the revolutionary groups, the PSR was extremely skeptical of constitutional concessions by the ancien regime. A representative of the people with limited competence and hence could not seriously challenge the power of the autocracy must appear to be a mockery of the party's objectives. The tsarist Duma was regarded as simply a diversion, intended only to delay the capitulation of the old order. Instead of wasting limited resources on a constitutional game that was more apparent than real, the SRs preferred to advance the cause of revolution.

The PSR's first statement on the consultative "Bulygin Duma" in August 1905 made it quite clear that the party looked upon this travesty of the parliamentary idea with scorn. The project was condemned as a "falsification of the will of the people" and the party recommended a total boycott. *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia* justified the party's position with the claim that "taking part in these elections would mean the

[109] Soveshchanie TsK-ta s gruppoi voennykh rabotnikov, PSR Archive 758/6.

[110] See the corresponding decision of the 5th Party Council from 1909: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 44f. In the discussion the supporters of a "party neutrality" were also to be heard: Stenogr. otch. 9-go, 11-go zas. V-go soveta, PSR Archive 792.

[111] Viktor Voennyi, K voprosu o prichinakh neudach, p. 225, italics in original.

self-castration of the party." To demonstrate to the autocracy the real will of the people, the central party paper called for the organization of protest assemblies in the villages and townships – in other words, an "active" boycott.[112]

The SRs also regarded the new Duma announced by the October Manifest with extreme skepticism. Although this Duma had significantly more rights than its crippled predecessor, it nonetheless appeared to most delegates at the first party congress as merely a plaything of autocracy. Despite the December defeat, they argued that the revolution did not have to take crumbs from the ruler's table. Therefore, the party congress passed almost unanimously a resolution that once again not only called for a boycott but, contrary to Chernov's wordy arguments, even refused to call for anti-Duma agitation. That is, the party congress regarded agitation against the Duma as tantamount bowing before the tsarist government committing and treason to its own principles.[113] The party supported not the cautious tactics of its leading theorist but instead the blind extremism of Minor: "Let it [the Duma] be supremely black-hundredist, let only scoundrels sit in it; that will be better for us because there will be no illusions."[114]

It soon transpired that it was not rightists and "Black Hundreds"[115] who dominated the first state Duma but the Kadets. Despite many reservations, even SRs could not deny that the Kadets were an opposition group. Because it was impossible to denounce this representative of the people as a servile instrument of autocracy and an accomplice of the unjust state, the meaning and purpose of the boycott decision now became questionable. The boycott finally lost all meaning when the peasantry, despite the joint appeal from the PSR and the All-Russian Union of Peasants, rushed to the polls. The SR leaders had every reason to recall the rebuke of the party's most authoritative personality. In February 1906, Gershuni wrote from Siberia and commentated that he was "thoroughly astonished" when he heard of the January decision. Completely ignoring the Duma was anarchistic; "at the very least a widespread and energetic" agitation against the tsarist fraud should have been attempted.[116]

[112] Vneshnii mir i vnutrenniaia voina, in: RR No. 73 (15 August 1905), pp. 1–5, citation p. 4; Eshche o Gosudarstvennoi Dume, in: RR No. 76 (15 October 1905), pp. 1–6. For the Bulygin Duma see M. Szeftel, The Legislative Reform of August 6, 1905 (The "Bulygin Duma"), in: Mélanges Antonio Marongiu. Etudes presentées à la Commission International pour l'histoire des assemblées d'états. (Palermo, 1967), pp. 137–183; Ivanov, Boikot Bulyginskoi Dumy.

[113] See Protokoly 1906, p. 10ff., especially p. 16, p. 22ff.

[114] Protokoly 1906, p. 15.

[115] For this radical right wing, partially pre-fascist movement see H. Rogger, "The Formation of the Russian Right, 1900–1906," in: Californian Slavic Studies 3 (1964), pp. 66–94; Rogger, "Was there a Russian Fascism? The Union of Russian People." In. JMH 36 (1964), pp. 398–415; D.C. Rawson, The Union of the Russian People, 1905–1907: A Study of the Radical Right. Ph.d. Diss. Washington 1971.

[116] Letter from G.A. Gershuni, 23 February 1906, ZP No. 4552 f. 2. His opinion did not prevent Gershuni from demanding an uncompromising policy against the Duma. In the summer he wrote to Chernov

In May 1906, the first party council tried to adjust to the new situation. However, because entry into the Duma was blocked, there was no chance to correct the earlier mistake right away. The party could only make close contact with the related group of Trudoviki[117] and in this indirect way try to participate in parliamentary activity and to profit from its agitational effects. This method essentially led to the annulment of the resolution of the party congress. The party council would have preferred to deny, at least verbally, that such was the case. In effect, it admitted the new tactical orientation when it expressly stated that the Duma contained "elements that were purely proletarian and belonging to the working peasantry."[118]

The chance for an official and complete revision of the failed strategy came as the tsar dissolved the first Duma in the summer of 1906 and ordered new elections. In order to allow a representative party assembly the opportunity to discuss and decide this difficult problem, the SR leaders organized a party council meeting for October. Eight oblast delegates, one delegate each from Moscow and St. Petersburg and five members of the Central Committee, were represented at this meeting.[119] The party's opinion appeared to be quite definite. A referendum was held (with admittedly moderate participation levels) and showed that SRs in the south, north, northwest, central oblasts, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Caucasus favored participation in the Duma elections. Only the party members in Ukraine were opposed; the Urals and Volga region were undecided. The debates in the party council, however, showed that this referendum revealed only very incompletely the actual mood of the party. The victory of the prudent and those ready for compromise was not nearly as decisive as it at first appeared. The assertions of some delegates were not contradicted that a social division split the party into two camps over the Duma question. The majority of members, i.e., workers and peasants and the "lower-level organizations" (workers' unions, peasant committees), voted "almost everywhere" against a boycott while the local party leaders from the intelligentsia were united in their determination to maintain the old position.[120] This situation impelled opponents of the Duma to make the

and suggested that "a series of the most radical draft bills" must be put before the Duma and one must especially "assail" the Kadets and not merely "criticize" them even though he thought that the PSR was at the moment "not yet ready" for a conflict. See a letter of Gershuni's to V.M. Chernov from 7 May 1906, ZP No. 4552 f. 2.

[117] For the Trudoviki see D.A. Kolesnichenko, Agrarnye proekty Trudovoi gruppy v I-oi Gosudarstvennoi Dume, in: IZ 82 (1968), pp. 40–88; Kolesnichenko, Vozniknovenie i deiatel'nost' Trudovoi gruppy, in: ISSSR 1967, 4, pp. 76–89; Kolesnichenko, K voprosu o politicheskoi evoliutsii trudovikov v 1906 g., in: IZ 92 (1973), pp. 84–108. For the first Duma see S.M. Sidel'nikov, Obrazovanie i deiatel'nost pervoi Gosudarstvennoi Dumy (M. 1962).

[118] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 56.

[119] For the following: Protokoly [vtorogo] Soveta Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (26–30 October 1906); Vtoroe sobranie Soveta P.S.-R. Izvlechenie iz protokolov, PSR Archive 489.

[120] See Sovet partii o Gosudarstvennoi Dume, in: Trud No. 5 (November 1906), p. 3 as well as the protocols of the second party council in PSR Archive 489. Partial results of the referendum from the

threat that the party would fall apart if the party council decided to participate in the election. This may have been an exaggeration, but unquestionably many active underground fighters saw legal tactics as a violation of essential principles, as a sacrilege of revolutionary politics. Breshkovskaia, for example, declared in September 1906 that "the party cannot in principle take part in the Duma."[121] At the same time, proponents of Duma participation declared the problem to be one of tactical opportunism and a duty to the party's grassroots. They argued that because "the masses wanted participation," the PSR – like other revolutionary parties – had to make every effort to use the Duma as a stage for agitation. The delegate from the south oblast warned: "If we approve the boycott, then we can close up shop."[122] The conference accepted this point of view and decided, by a vote of thirteen to two, in favor of a further experiment with legal politics.

At the same time, the party council hurried to emphasize that the change of course by no means limited the "tactics of the struggle" as hitherto practiced. As a "question of means and not principle," it was actually possible to combine both tactics together into a harmonious whole. This was all the easier because, after the experience with the first Duma, the population no longer believed in constitutional illusions. As the party fought in the Duma arena with the weapons admitted by the autocracy, it simultaneously had to continue revolutionary action. Even before the elections, argued some SRs, the party had to confirm the new tactic by seeking to put up its own candidates wherever possible and despite the expected persecution. The party resolution determined that common election lists were only possible with related SR groups of non-Russian nationality, such as the Armenian "Dashnaktsutiun," the "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" (Armianskaia Revoliutsionnaia Federatsiia), or the "Georgian Party of SR Federalists" (Gruzinskaia Partiia Sotsialistov Federalistov-Revoliutsionerov). Regarding other parties, "no matter how socialist they may be," it was only permitted to agree on certain candidates.[123] Internally, the PSR was not quite as self-confident. The central oblast committee, for example, directed subordinate organizations to enter into coalitions with Trudoviki or Social Democrats and, "in extreme cases," even with Kadets if the election of a Socialist Revolutionary was not secure.[124] It appears that the PSR by and large avoided working with the liberals because the party deeply suspected their readiness to nego-

central industrial area are dispersed in: PSR Archive 169, 193, 127, 763; a summary in: PI No. 4 (5 January 1907), p. 10.

[121] See Pis'mo po voprosu o vyborakh vo vtoruiu Dumu, Chernigov (no date, approx. October 1906), PSR Archive 758/9.

[122] Vtoroe sobranie soveta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 489.

[123] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 57ff., citation p. 57.

[124] Oblastn. Komitet Tsentral'noi Oblasti, Directive for the elections to the Second Duma, PSR Archive 676.

tiate with autocracy and also feared losses among workers. The PSR was, however, prepared to enter an election union with the RSDRP and the People's Socialists. This union was formally sealed on 25 January 1907 and led to left-wing blocs in such cities as St. Petersburg, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Perm', Ekaterinoslav, Saratov, Astrakhan', Samara, Voronezh, and Tula. In addition, the Central Committee founded together with the People's Socialists a common election organization, Zemlia i Volia. This organization propagated a more moderate, pro-peasant program and was especially directed at members of the liberal-populist intelligentsia.[125]

Documentation on the election campaign is sparse. The few scattered comments that can be found however give the impression that almost none of the SR local organizations was up to this new task. The campaign was utterly with plan and could have not been very successful. In any case, hardly any committee was satisfied with its work.[126]

Because of the importance that the SR leadership attached to the Duma question, it convened another extraordinary party council in February 1907. This council was to confirm the decision of the second party council and to outline party policy inside and outside the Duma. Above all, it had to be decided whether or not the new course was compatible with the continuation of terrorist attacks. In the name of the Central Committee, Chernov argued for consistency and recommended – just as in the spring of 1906 for the first Duma – the suspension of political terror during the second Duma. He saw correctly that activities regarded by the government as capital crimes would make the work of SR deputies practically impossible. He also noted that the SR deputies would face the constant danger of losing parliamentary immunity and being arrested. In addition, essential cooperation with the other left-wing Duma factions that rejected such attacks would also be made difficult. In a word, it was not possible to combine legalism and terrorism.[127]

The majority of delegates remained unpersuaded. Despite the decision of the second party council and despite an intensive campaign of the central party press,[128] they still regarded the new policy with extreme skepticism. Although the peasant had forced them to approve the experiment, they were by no means prepared to abandon

[125] See Levanov, Iz istorii, p. 124. According to him left blocks stood for election in a total of 38 cities. See also Erofeev, Narodnye sotsialisty, p. 54, p. 57, p. 59 and passim. As far as I can tell, aside from a joint call to the election from the PSR and the RSDRP (No. 485) there does not seem to be any other document in the archive relating to this problem. For the "Zemlia i Volia" see Argunov, Azef v partii S.-R., VI, p. 198.

[126] See Protokoly 1908, p. 160 as well as the documents in PSR Archive 426, 483, 303.

[127] Protokoly PSR 1907, p. 15ff.

[128] see among others: Nasha taktika na vyborakh, in: PI No. 2 (25 November 1906), pp. 3–4; Ts.K. P.S.-R.: K grazhdanam, in: PI No. 2 (25 November 1906), pp. 4–7; K kharakteristike nashei pozitsii v dumskom voprose, in: Trud No. 5 (November 1906), pp. 2–3; Duma i revoliutsiia, in: Trud No. 6 (December 1906), pp. 1–5. A complete issue of "Trud" is to be found in PSR Archive 472.

the revolutionary struggle. And revolutionary struggle, in their mind, included above all terror. The attitude of party grassroots in 1907 was similar to its attitude at the end of 1905, when the transition to a legal, democratic party had been the subject of debate. SRs at the grassroots demonstrated little desire to take an unnecessary risk, primarily because they believed that the second Duma would, sooner or later, suffer the same fate as the first. Hence most speakers argued for a continuation of militant tactics and warned the party to concentrate on the unchanged object – socialist revolution. They therefore directed future Duma delegates to "unmask" the government whenever possible. They even mentioned the possibility of an attack against the tsar. This option was something that even the PSR avoided debating publicly.[129]

It was only the authority of Gershuni, who had just returned from Siberia and a triumphal tour in the United States, that made a compromise between the Central Committee and the radical faction of council delegates possible. He warned against questioning the programmatic decision of the second party council. He also pointed out that the "people" had expressed its opinion through participation in the Duma elections. But when "the voice of the organized party of the proletariat and the peasantry clearly and definitely decides" to participate in the Duma, then it was the task of "committees and central institutions of the party ... to follow through on this decision." On the question of terror, Gershuni was prepared to compromise and offered the following "magic formula": "With a good Duma a bad bomb is not a good tactic; with a bad Duma a good bomb is unavoidable." On the one hand, the founder of the party confirmed with this phrase the necessity of political assassinations; on the other hand, he made the judgment that the appropriateness of assassination depended on the work of the parliament. He therefore recommended that "all central and local acts of terror" of significant importance be put under the "complete control" of the party. This meant practically that all-important acts of terror remained under the control of the Central Committee.[130]

The party council approved its final resolution under the influence of Gershuni's highly praised speech. This resolution demanded of SR Duma delegates a truly acrobatic political balancing act between irresponsible confrontation and false compromises. The Socialist Revolutionaries were told not to endanger the Duma yet, at the same time, to "unmask" the government whenever possible. In addition, they

[129] See Protokoly 1907, p. 15, p. 21 and passim. A letter from "2n+1" from Russia to the Organization Bureau had prepared the party leadership for this opposition: "There is a very strong current in the party that believes that the decision of the [second, M.H.] party council concerning the participation in the Duma was a decision of the higher-ups that was then forced on the party." See PSR Archive 303. See also an overview concerning the attitude of the local organizations in: Pered s"ezdom, in: PI No. 7 (30 March 1907), pp. 5–7; PI No. 8 (12 April 1907), pp. 5–8.

[130] Protokoly 1907, p. 81ff., citation p. 84, p. 88, p. 93.

were to build a united front with the other "socialist and extreme leftist parties" in order to represent the true interests of the people.[131]

The SR fraction at the second Duma consisted of thirty-four deputies. They followed policies that more or less corresponded to the directives of the extraordinary party council. For example, they rejected the budget as proposed by the government; they also refused to approve the conscription of recruits because the army serves "only the oppression of its own people." Together with the SDs, they launched an initiative for areas plagued with famine.[132] They even dared to recognize terror by their party as a legitimate means of resistance against the "carriers of arbitrary rule and violence."[133] The parliamentary activity of SRs culminated in a draft bill on agrarian reform that proposed to legalize the socialization of land. The PSR portrayed this bill as the solution for Russia's economic and social problems. Although this bill was rejected by the government and Duma majority, it nevertheless received, along with the support of the Trudoviki, a respectable 104 votes.[134] But the SR deputies were also prepared to compromise. To name just two important decisions, they supported the election of the Kadet F.A. Golovin to Duma president and in the debates over the governments program did not seek a vote of no confidence against Stolypin because the party did not want to provoke the emperor into dissolving this Duma. Numerous proclamations and the continuously published "Letters of the Deputies" maintained the contact between the fraction, public, and party. A significant number of PSR local committees even founded special periodicals to report on the Duma's activities. This was a good indication that the interest of the party grassroots in the "people's representative" remained strong.[135]

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[131] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 59ff., citations pp. 60–61.

[132] See the "Bericht der Sozial-Revolutionären Fraktion" of the second Duma in: Bericht 1907, p. 66ff., citation p. 80. Further: Protokoly zasedanii Dumskoi Gruppy Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov and statistical data on the members of the faction, PSR Archive 800b. For the Second Duma see A. Levin, The Second Duma. A Study of the Social-Democratic Party and the Russian Constitutional Experiment. (Hamden/Conn., 1966) (for the PSR briefly, p. 37f.; G. Tokmakoff, P.A. Stolypin and the Second Duma, in: SEER 50 (No. 118, January 1972), pp. 49–62; S.G. Tomsinskii, Bor'ba klassov i partii vo vtoroi gosudarstvennoi Dume (M. 1924).

[133] See the speech of a delegate cited by Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 344f.

[134] The text is published in Bericht 1907, p. 93ff. This draft bill is not to be confused with the comparatively more moderate project of an agrarian reform which was presented by 104 Trudoviki in the first Duma. Likewise it is not identical with the radical "Project of the 33" that was presented during the same session of the Second Duma. This radical bill was inspired by the idea of a revolutionary levelling of the right to use land and was the product of a group of Trudoviki who sympathized with the Socialist Revolutionaries. The bill that was officially approved by the PSR and presented to the second Duma was really more of a compromise of the two earlier bills. The PSR bill, however, expressed socialist revolutionary ideals more closely because it, as opposed to the Trudoviki bills, contained the demand for the expropriation of land without compensation. See Perrie, Agrarian policy, p. 174; Kolesnichenko, Agrarnye proekty; Levanov, Iz istorii, p. 59ff.

[135] See among others: Dumskoe Ekho. Izd. Sevastopol'skogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 1, 2 (March–April

The PSR's attempt at legality came to an abrupt end when the tsar dissolved the second Duma on 3 July 1907. Even without this arbitrary act, however, the policy of compromise initiated by the second party council must be regarded as a failure. At the London party conference in August 1908, Argunov had to concede in his critical report that the SRs had not succeeded, "to the degree necessary," in using the parliament as tribune.[136] One purely superficial reason for this failure was undoubtedly the poor selection of personnel for the Duma fraction. Not one party member of stature, none of the numerous sympathizers in the broad stratum of the intelligentsia, none of the well-known authors and journalists were members of the fraction. Instead, third-class personalities represented the PSR in the Duma, and the PSR Duma faction consisted of many "undesirables," forcing the party to distance itself from positions taken by these elements.[137] But these compromising and painful errors pointed to deeper causes for the limited success of parliamentary work. One must also consider the failure of local committees in running the election and, more importantly, the merely half-hearted approval of lower and middle level party cadres for this policy. The main support for the party organization and its activities at the grassroots was the SR intelligentsia. Although it was contrary to their convictions, they only accepted the tactical change, if at all, out of feared that their followers would not have obeyed a call for a boycott. It is therefore safe to assume that their engagement in the election campaign was correspondingly limited. The conspiratorial hard core of the party regarded elections as a burdensome duty and not as something essential. Thus, despite all the proclamations to the contrary, the attitude in upper levels of the party was about the same. It is difficult to accuse only delegates of being responsible for the fact that the Duma fraction was, as far as one can determine, about as closely tied to the party as the Legal Populists had been at the end of 1905.

Under these conditions, it is no wonder that the SR leadership had no trouble in unifying the party in a united front against the third Duma – an "illegal monstrosity of a counter-revolutionary coup."[138] After autocracy had so altered the elections laws to guarantee a desired pliant "people's representative," renewed participation in the elections was impossible for virtually all local committees. The third party council was able to determine with satisfaction that even the "most politically backward" had abandoned all hope for an evolutionary change in the system. The party council

1907), PSR Archive 488; Narod i Duma, Izd. Severo-Zapadnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta PSR No. 1 (April 1906), No. 2 (April 1907), PSR Archive 442.

[136] Protokoly 1908, p. 160 "Golubev."

[137] See Protokoly 1908, p. 160.

[138] Chto zhe teper'?, in: ZT No. 1 (July 1907), p. 8. See also: A. Levin, The Third Duma, Election and Profile (Hamden/Conn., 1973); A.Ia. Avrekh, Tsarizm i tret'eiiun'skaia sistema (M. 1966); Avrekh, Stolypin i Tret'ia Duma (M. 1968).

delegates therefore resolved unanimously to fight the Duma with the old slogan of "active boycott."[139]

With this new change in policy, the PSR returned to a strategy that unquestionably corresponded more closely to the subjective essence of its theory and to the radical, voluntarist character of its practical work. When the RSDWP decided to remain in the Duma,[140] this decision was possibly due to their conception of a bourgeois stage in the Russian revolution. The revolutionary parties, on the other hand, had to hold out as minority parties until the time was ripe for a socialist revolt. The SRs' conception of revolution did not permit such a moratorium. For the PSR, constitutionalism was bound to real democracy – that is, the unlimited self-determination of the "working" masses. Every type of popular representation that had not been established by a socialist revolution was therefore an "operetta Duma." To participate in elections and thereby recognize such a Duma was tantamount to betrayal of the socialist ideal and "liquidationism." By making the Duma boycott a criterion for truly revolutionary politics, the PSR made this question – notwithstanding numerous statements to the contrary – a matter of principle, not just mere tactics. Hence the participation of the PSR in the Duma could not last for very long.

5.6. "Fighting Tactics" Instead of Trade Unionism: SR Agitation Among the Workers

Even though the PSR's theory and practical activities concentrated on the agrarian population, the conventional opinion that the PSR was the party of peasants and RSDWP the party of workers is a false simplification. The SRs also assumed that a revolution could not succeed without the participation of the urban proletariat. In the united front of all the oppressed that was to sweep away the autocracy in an armed revolt, the proletariat was to have an essential function. It is also important to recall that, in terms of the social background of its members, the PSR was more an advance party of the proletarian revolution than the agrarian. The paradox was that the majority of the PSR members came from the urban working class. Therefore the competition between the SRs and SDs was fought not so much in the villages as in the cities.

Sparked by the extensive workers' unrest in south Russia during the summer of 1903, theoretical arguments in the PSR before the 1905 revolution sought mainly

[139] Materialy tret'ego Soveta partii, PSR Archive 679; Iz materialov Soveta P.S.-R., in: ZT No. 4 (30 August 1907), pp. 13–14; Tret'ei Dume – boikot, in: Trud No. 16 (August 1907), pp. 1–4.

[140] See Lenin's criticism of the socialist revolutionary boycott decision: V.I. Lenin, Kak sotsialisty-revoliutsionery podvodiat itogi revoliutsii i kak revoliutsiia podvela itogi sotsialistam-revoliutsioneram (1909), in: CW, vol. 17, pp. 339–53, especially p. 345ff. For a look at the RSDRP's tactic of legality in general after 1907: R.C. Elwood, Russian Social Democracy in the Underground. A Study of the RSDRP in the Ukraine, 1907–1914 (Assen, 1974), p. 173ff.

to evaluate the usefulness of strikes as a tactic in the struggle against exploitation. Committed to the idea of popular insurrection, the party made great efforts to distance itself from the SD position on this issue. If all the oppressed social classes were to unite in a common revolutionary struggle, then the means and ends of this struggle had to bear a general character and could not be tied to one specific group. At best, the struggle to improve the material conditions of life could be but one method in the revolutionary struggle and must always be subordinated to the higher political purpose. Therefore the PSR approved strikes only as a means of initiating broad mass movement and only when this mobilizing function was intended. Chernov criticized the SDs by claiming that every demonstration by the workers "unavoidably takes on a political character regardless whether the participants want this or not." One must use this potential and not be content with mere economic objectives. "Not in lieu of, but rather together with other means" – above all, above all terrorist attacks – could strikes have their greatest effect.[141] The PSR's propaganda followed Chernov's line by trying to create a comprehensive political consciousness among the workers. A primary objective of PSR propaganda was to make the workers understand that they could only improve their position "with the help of revolution, a general revolt"[142] and not, as the SDs claimed, by wresting economic concessions from their oppressors. It is not hard to see that behind this difference was the old charge against the Russian Marxists of being guilty of "economism." The ideological boundary between the SRs and the SDs was drawn, as in the 1880s and 1890s, between the *politiki* and *ekonomiki,*[143] or, to use a favorite phrase of the PSR, between political agitation and pure "trade unionism."

This tactic, as already shown, was not successful before the 1905 revolution, for the PSR failed to establish itself among the workers. 1905 appeared to bring about a change; the new political conditions eliminated many barriers and disadvantages with respect to the Social Democrats. The SRs no longer suffered from a serious shortage of agitators. One significant reason for this deficiency had been the Okhrana's belief that terrorists were more dangerous than their peaceful Marxist competitors. Nor were the latter any longer able systematically to keep SRs out.[144] Moreover, the fact that the concept of "Socialist Revolutionary" was bound with the

[141] [V.M. Chernov], Vseobshchaia stachka, in: RR No. 29 (5 August 1903), pp. 1–3, here p. 1, p. 2; also in: Sbornik statei Antonova e.g. pp. 123–131. See further Chernov, Rabochee dvizhenie i nashi takticheskie zadachi, in: RR No. 10 (August 1902), pp. 3–7, also in: Sbornik statei Antonova, pp. 90–102; Nasushchnye voprosy sovremennoi revoliutsionnoi strategii, in: RR No. 50 (1 August 1904), pp. 3–8; Marksizm i vseobshchaia stachka, in: RR No. 49 (1 July 1904), pp. 1–5.

[142] Programma zaniatii v rabochikh kruzhkakh. (Izd. Saratovskim Komitetom Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov 1903 g.), in: RR No. 28 (15 July 1903), pp. 21–23, citation p. 21f.

[143] See for this: Wildman, Making of a Workers' Revolution passim.

[144] See Proshloe i nastoiashchee. In: Biulleten' Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov No 1 (March 1906, pp. 1-8, citation p. 4.

needs of a peasant revolution was no longer a problem for workers, for the necessity of an alliance between the city and countryside was obvious to all. In the cities the increasing radicalism and fighting mood of the urban population was especially helpful to the PSR, for the party's agitation for revolt and terrorist tactics made it a credible and appealing alternative to the Social Democrats.[145]

Unfortunately for the PSR, these improved political conditions did not lead to any great successes in its attempts to win over the workers. A massive change in the political sympathies of the workers in favor of SRs did not transpire, and the PSR could not make any significant gains against the commanding position of Social Democracy. At the end of 1905, the SDs played the leading role in the Soviet of Workers Deputies, whereas the SRs dominated the congresses of the All-Russian Peasant Union. This situation more or less reflected the actual distribution of power. At the beginning of 1906, an analytical and informative article from circles close to the PSR Central Committee found that the RSDRP maintained its position because it was only the "gray masses" and the "youth" who went over to the SRs. The "older, respected and influential workers who were known in the factories and whose convictions were confirmed under the monopolistic influence of the earlier exclusive domination of Social Democratic circles" kept their distance from the Socialist Revolutionaries. It was thus possible that the assemblies of factory workers would pass SR resolutions even though these assemblies were always directed by Socialist Democrats. These factory assemblies also elected SDs to raion committees and workers' soviets. The PSR did achieve victories of agitation, but the organizational benefits were limited. Summing up the situation, the author of this article declared that the current situation was favorable to the SRs, but the party should be concerned about the future since it did not have sufficient resources to lead the urban movement.[146]

Even after this sober assessment of the current situation, the SR leadership still saw no reason to make a serious effort to correct the mistakes indicated in the article and thereby avert the anticipated harmful consequences. As long as unrest in the countryside continued, the party did not stop fanning the flames of revolt. In addition, the PSR could be certain of significant resonance in the urban working class. Indeed, it could with satisfaction point to two trade unions that were under PSR control and that were of central strategic importance. At the end of 1905, three SRs (together one Bolshevik, one Menshevik, one Social Democrat who did not belong to any fraction, and one anarchist) sat in the Central Bureau of the All-Russian

[145] See a comment made during an oblast conference of the South Oblast from November 1906: "Our fighting tactics-that is the ground upon which the seeds of the present organization gradually grew." (Iuzhnaia oblast') [November 1906], PSR Archive 424.

[146] Proshloe i nastoiashchee, p. 4.

Union of Railroad Workers and Employees. The chair of this Central Bureau was the well-known PSR party member, V.N. Pereverzev, from the Moscow Committee.[147] Moreover, virtually all the local organizations of the Union of the Post Office and Telegraph Employees tended to support the PSR. These bridgeheads in trade unions and the unquestionably impressive influx of new members and sympathizers served to conceal the organizational weaknesses of SR work in the cities. Not surprisingly, the careless leadership became shortsighted. Only as the unrest slowly died down and the revolution finally came to an end did the leadership open its eyes to the reality of the situation. The PSR had to admit that it had largely failed to establish itself securely in the trade-union movement that began in 1905. One SR regional paper tried to explain this situation by claiming that "the logic of life dictated the dedication of all resources and all attention to the peasantry and the agrarian program," leaving the workers' question completely forgotten. Now the party faced a situation where it lacked even enough good quality agitational literature and its program was no longer relevant.[148] From early 1907, the PSR Central Committee tried to make amends for past failures. After the party had compromised its "fighting principle" by participating in the second Duma, it now turned more decisively, especially after the coup of 3 June 1907, to "peaceful" agitation among the workers. It was, moreover, the trade unions, next to the parliament, that represented the most important gain from the revolution[149] and that had to play an essential role in this new strategy.

In July 1907 for the first time, the third party council worked out the PSR's position on the function and objectives of unions and the relationship between unions and political parties. Borrowing from the usual SD division of labor, the PSR party council saw it as the duty of unions to lead the economic struggle and to fight for a

[147] See Sablinsky, The All-Russian Railroad Union, p. 117; Pushkareva, Zheleznodorozhniki, p. 109f.; Pereverzev, Pervyi vserossiiskii zheleznodorozhnyi soiuz 1905 goda, who nevertheless emphasized that despite its close alliance with the RSDRP and the PSR the Railroad workers union had a "party-neutral" character (p. 44).

[148] Izvestiia Bakinskoi organizatsii PSR No. 1 (18 April 1908), pp. 1–2., PSR Archive 553/II. Chernov also admitted mistakes: K perezhivaemomu momentu, in: ZT No. 8 (December 1907), p. 1–6, here p. 3. Sharply critical: B. Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], K voprosu ob osnovakh rabochei programmy, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 2 (1910), p. 127–150. It was certainly no accident that the plans to establish an institution to coordinate the work among the proletariat similar to the Central Peasant Commission and the Central Military Bureau were, aside from a few months, not realized. See below, p. 188.

[149] For the beginnings of the trade union movement see D. Antoshkin, Professional'noe dvizhenie v Rossii. Posobie dlia samoobrazovaniia i kursov po professional'nomu dvizheniiu. 3-e izd. (M. 1925), p. 70ff. who deliberately "puts aside" the role of the PSR (p. 130); W. Grinewitsch, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Rußland. Vol. I: 1905–1914 (Berlin, 1927) as well as E. Mil'shtein, Politicheskie techeniia v rossiiskom profdvizhenii 1905–1907 gg., in: Proletariat v revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. K 25-letiiu revoliutsii 1905 g. (M.-L. 1930), p. 443ff. with short comments on the PSR (p. 149f. and p.470ff.). A manuscript in PSR Archive 635/II on the "istoriia professional'nogo dvizheniia v Rossii" unfortunately is only partially completed.

material improvement in the lives of the workers. The party's task was to act in the political arena. But the core of the PSR's position differed from that of their Marxist rivals in that the unions had to be "non-party." The SRs constantly emphasized the importance of preventing the unions from being drawn into the feuds between the several socialist parties. At the same time, the SRs had always promoted the unity of politics and economics, of political and economic objectives. "Party-neutrality," therefore, did not mean ideological indifference or a ban on taking political positions, but rather connoted a purely formal neutrality. The workers' organizations should belong neither to Social Democracy nor to the PSR. Accordingly, the party council condemned on the one hand "every attempt to limit union activities to the economy," but on the other hand suggested that "the necessary synthesis of labor and politics" cannot be expressed "in the acceptance of any kind of completely concrete minimum of political demands as terms of admission." Instead the objective of the union's work must be formulated "in general as the struggle for the material, legal, and spiritual interests of the workers" as well as a struggle against exploitation and oppression.[150] Local commentators explained that it was essential for unions to assist in solving political problems in the communities. Without this participation, the union could not become schools of struggle "for the common cause," that is, for socialism.[151]

The reality of daily political work, however, hindered the practical achievement of goals set by the party council. The PSR did in fact reject the request from the Union of Railway Workers to enter the party.[152] In 1908, the PSR once again emphasized its view that unions should embrace "all workers – regardless of their political opinions."[153] This of course did not prevent the SRs from engaging in the hard struggle for influence and power in the proletarian organizations. They presented themselves as "defenders of the independence and autonomy" of the professional cooperatives and, simultaneously, constantly accused the SDs of misusing the unions for their own egoistical purposes. Chernov spoke of the Social Democrats' attempt

[150] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 33f. See also the discussion in: Materialy III-go Soveta PSR, PSR Archive 679. Important: [V.M. Chernov], Nasha pozitsiia v professional'nom dvizhenii, in: ZT No. 2 (12 July 1907), p. 1–4. Further: Sashin, K voprosu o partii i professional'nykh Soiuzakh, in: Sbornik "Na ocherednye temy." SPb. 1906, p. 3–16; Professional'nye soiuzy i P.S.-R., in: Trud No. 17 (october 1907), p. 3–16; K zakonoproektu s-r. gruppy o professional'nykh Soiuzakh, in: Trud No. 13 (April, 1907), p. 5–7.

[151] Staryi rabochii. K voprosu o professional'nykh Soiuzakh, in: Trud No. 11 (March 1907), pp. 1–5, here p. 4.

[152] See Nasha pozitsiia v professional'nom dvizhenii, p. 4.

[153] According to a resolution of the PSR's fourth party council which met in August 1908: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 31f.

to "castrate" the unions.[154] As justified as these complaints may have been,[155] the pose of neutrality was hardly believable for a party that had systematically robbed the All-Russian Peasant Union of its independence despite its strong resistance. The demands of the party council proved to be nothing more than an ideological weapon to attack the dominant position of Social Democracy among the working class.

The practical steps taken by the PSR leadership in the summer of 1907 revealed its true intentions. To end the "more or less accidental character" of SR activities in workers' organizations and thereby begin a "planned" process,[156] all party members were directed "as a matter of principle" to join the union representing their trade. Such SR union members were by no means to concentrate solely on strengthening these unions, but rather were to "promote" the PSR so that it "not be without influence on the union colleagues and the activity of the union as a whole."[157] More concrete instructions came in an internal directive from the Organization Bureau to the local committees. Pointing to the political reality in the unions, it recommended that the comrades at the grassroots become candidates for leadership positions, "because the leadership of almost all trade unions ... is in the hands of Social Democrats." It therefore warned quite strongly that, if the party did not "energetically" and "actively" work to change this situation, the all-Russian trade-union conference scheduled for October-November 1907 threatened to became a "one-sided" affair "run exclusively by Social Democrats."[158]

Whether this late awakening of the PSR to the fundamental importance of unions could have made good what it had neglected since 1905 must remain an open question. The party simply did not have enough time to apply all its resources to the new tactic: by late 1907 and early 1908, the organization had been largely destroyed and its activities severely paralyzed. The intensification of agitation among workers in the course of 1907 did not bring the party any significant success. SRs continued to dominate the Union of Railway Workers and the Union of the Post Office and Telegraph employees, and indeed they apparently improved their position in these unions. The PSR also had great influence in the organization of the sales clerks and shop employees (*soiuz prikazchikov*).[159] Nevertheless, the PSR could not make

[154] Nasha pozitsiia v professional'nom dvizhenii, p. 4.

[155] See Antoshkin, Professional'noe dvizhenie, p. 139ff.

[156] Sovet partii o professional'nykh Soiuzakh, in: Trud No. 16 (August 1907), pp. 4–6, here p. 4.

[157] Nasha pozitsiia v professional'nom dvizhenii, p. 3.

[158] Organizatsionnoe Biuro pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. 2 August [1907], PSR Archive 197. A letter to the party leadership from 5 May 1907 noted that the unions are tending "more and more to come under the exclusive influence of the Social Democrats" and demanded that the party must do something. (PSR Archive 596/VI).

[159] An especially solid PSR bastion was the "Organization of the Volga Shippers." Even though it was hardly one of the most important unions the PSR often pointed at the party's influence in this union with pride. See Razvitie Volzhskoi Sudokhodnoi Organizatsii P.S.-R. In. Izvestiia V.S. O. P.S.-R.

a breakthrough in those areas of the trade union movement dominated by Social Democracy. In the majority of unions, the Marxists were the leading figures. In a Central Committee report concerning the workers' question (presented to the delegates of the third party conference), Chernov had to admit that "Social Democracy has used the trade unions as a means for establishing bridgeheads in positions held by SRs. They have also strengthened their movement because they can rely upon an extensive organizational net and many experienced revolutionaries."[160] A conference of SR agitators among workers, held in August 1907 in Simferopol' in the Crimea, confirmed Chernov's conclusion. One delegate presented a typical picture of activity in the PSR's "Tauride Union": "a) Due to a shortage of agitators, the inexperience of local organizations in this area, and finally the complete disorganization of the PSR's Tauride Union, the work of Socialist Revolutionaries in the unions is weak; b) in certain unions, such as the construction unions and the port and railroad workers unions, the influence of the Socialist Revolutionaries is strong; c) all other unions are dominated by the Social Democrats; d) almost all central organizations [*Tsentral'nye soiuzy*] are controlled by social democratic organizations."

The representative from Simferopol' recommended that the party unify related local unions and then concentrate its agitation on unions where the party already had some influence. This representative saw the railway workers union as an especially good candidate in pursuing this new policy; the railway workers could thereby become the bridgehead for the PSR's conquest of other unions. However, the representative of the oblast committee of south Russia objected to this new tactic because, in his view, it rejected the autonomy of unions. After an extremely close reading of the tactical directives of the third party council, he claimed that a comprehensive strategy for the construction of the SR position would be impermissible. Instead, the party should orient itself toward the objectives of individual unions and consider the specific needs of each. The conference finally approved the highly original theoretical arguments of the oblast representative – more from considerations of party politics than conviction. In the concluding resolution, the conference emphasized that the activity of the workers' organizations had to be "party-neutral" because the majority of the members were politically "colorless" and undecided. But a policy of "party-neutrality" did not prevent the conference from using the recommendations of the delegate from Simferopol' as the basis for future work. Indeed the conference expressly called for increased efforts in placing Socialist Revolutionaries in leadership positions in the unions. It appeared that the party grass roots copied the

No. 2 (March 1907), pp. 2–3, PSR Archive 177, also 64; O Volzhskoi Sudokhodnoi Organizatsii P.S.-R, in: PI No. 8 (12 April 1907), pp. 8–9, as well further documents in PSR Archive 177 and 124.

[160] Materialy III-go soveta, PSR Archive 679.

tactical line of the leadership even in the contradiction between theory and practical work.[161]

What the main organizer of SR union work in the Volga area had to report was certainly not flattering for the PSR. He pointed out to party leaders that, although the various trades were rapidly organizing (in no city were there fewer than six such trade or professional organizations), all these new organizations were under the control of the Social Democrats. The latter converted the new workers' organizations into party cells and did not admit "any non-party members and certainly no Socialist Revolutionaries." He further complained bitterly that the SRs themselves were largely responsible for the party's lack of success in agitating the workers:

"Unfortunately, the Socialist Revolutionaries are not only fighting against the trade-union movement, but they are simply not interested in the desire among workers to organize trade unions. As a result, the workers ... organize and ignore us as we establish empty forms in the workers centers and raion groups ... The completely conscious worker will not be satisfied with the distribution of literature and diffuse propaganda and agitation. Our workers in the centers and the raions are only busy with this type of activity. What is the result? Namely this: these groups are extremely useless and burst like soap bubbles. Where are our best workers? They look for new ways and find them. Unfortunately, they frequently offer their noble heads for the accursed expropriations. Many, however, find the correct way and inspire mass organizations of the proletarians. Unfortunately, because of this important work, we lose these workers. What is more unfortunate; we are the reason why they leave us."[162]

To cite one last example consider what was reported from Ukraine. Here as well the attitude of the active party members towards the unions was "rather indifferent." It was often the case, for example in Khar'kov (as in Voronezh), that they refused to participate in union work.[163] A Central Committee inspector even found "those who opposed trade union work on principle."[164]

To be sure, SR activity among workers was probably not everywhere quite so bad as in the cases cited above. No doubt the PSR did have numerous working-class supporters – for example, in Baku and St. Petersburg and even after 1907. Never-

[161] Protokoly zaniatii konferentsii rabotnikov po professionai'nomu dvizheniiu Tavricheskogo Soiuza P.S.-R. (5–7 August 1907), PSR Archive 596/V; Iz Simferopolia v "Znamia Truda." O professional'noi konferentsii Kryma, PSR Archive 749 (the summary of the conference that was intended for publication); Rezoliutsii konferentsii rabotnikov po professional'nomu dvizheniiu Tavricheskogo Soiuza PSR, PSR Archive 546/I, printed in: ZT No. 9 (January 1908), pp. 13–15. See also a letter on a conference of the "party cadres" in the unions of St. Petersburg: PSR Archive 596/V.

[162] Petr Petrovich [pseudonym], Professional'noe dvizhenie [1907], PSR Archive 596/I; excerpts: S Povolzh'ia, PSR Archive 468.

[163] Materialy III-go soveta Partii, PSR Archive 679.

[164] Letter concerning the socialist revolutionary committee from Ekaterinoslav from 14 April [1907?], PSR Archive 758/9.

theless, for the most part, the party could only enjoy sporadic and local successes and these were rare enough. B.N. Lebedev, one of the future critics of the SR center from the "Pochin" group in 1909, summarized the party's predicament by declaring that the PSR never succeeded in eliminating the "isolation" of its agitators "from the mass of workers." Above all, this failure resulted from the ephemerality of its contact with trade unions: the party was only active "episodically and due to the initiative of individual persons."[165] The PSR put the workers question "always ... somewhere at the very end."[166]

In conclusion, one can identify the following as the deeper reasons for the negative results of PSR agitation among the working class:

1. Despite its recognition of the necessity for a revolution by the oppressed in both the city and countryside, the PSR's first priority definitely lay with peasant agitation. For a long time, the party underestimated the significance of the new trade-union movement.

2. The initial conditions for SR work among the urban masses were poor. Almost everywhere the party faced consolidated SD circles and thus had to contend with a very powerful competitor.

3. A significant portion of local party cadres concentrated their efforts on seeking to start mass revolts. Fascinated by open struggle, they regarded "peaceful" means of mass mobilization and politicization as unrevolutionary. Consequently, they rejected as an "objectivist-economic" error a form of agitation directed at the material needs of the workers. Not surprisingly, they had little interest in becoming engaged in trade union activity.

[165] A. Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Rabochaia organizatsiia (Zametka propagandista), in: ZT No. 16 (4 March 1909), p. 5–8, here p. 6.

[166] So Lebedev as official reporter on the workers question during the fifth party council in May 1909: Stenogr. otchety zasedanii V-go soveta Partii, 22-oe zas., p. 1, PSR Archive 792.

CHAPTER 6

The SR Party Organization in the Revolution of 1905–1907

In a backward country like Tsarist Russia, where the main difficulty of the revolutionary movement was to overcome the wide chasm separating the élite and masses, the question of party organization was especially important. It was not surprising, then, that this question was the occasion, if not the cause, of fissure in Social Democracy.[1] Indeed, it is very surprising that the PSR's first fundamental, theoretical contribution to the debate over this problem appeared in June 1905. It was of course true that the SR leadership had discussed the problems concerning the formal structure of the new party. Chernov, the author of a pioneering article, pointed out that a "special, principled, organizational question ... in a Social Democratic sense" did not arise. Whereas the Marxists regarded the party organization as a matter of great theoretical significance, Neo-Populism saw it as a purely pragmatic problem. As Chernov explained: "Our organizational question was somewhat simpler. It was only a matter of the practical, qualitative shortage of resources needed for the comprehensive concentration of local organizations, groups, and workers as well as meeting their needs." Although the importance of this problem was known since the founding of the party, it only became critical when revolutionary unrest in the cities

[1] See Geyer, Lenin, p. 368ff.; Keep, Rise of Social Democracy, p. 107ff.

and countryside became so widespread that a mass influx of new members and tasks overwhelmed local committees and almost threatened to undermine the organization of the PSR. Thus Chernov's article, although late, was still timely.

Even in Chernov's article, however, the outlines of an SR organizational strategy were vague and general. Indeed, his article lacked long-overdue recommendations on the construction of party organization that took into account the new revolutionary conditions. Instead, Chernov resisted to the hilt a policy that would force the party into a corset of the "inventions of some idle fantasists." He formulated the ideal whereby party organization should be the product of "life itself, of practical action." If there was to be a general principle of party construction at all, it should only pertain to appropriateness for the needs of the concrete situation at a particular moment and local conditions. Chernov regarded the construction of the party organization from a "synthetic point of view." Conspiracy and democracy should be combined just like federalism and centralism. The establishment of oblast organizations and the concentration of related areas of activity were pushed with the same intensity as strengthening of the center. Above all, he emphasized that the unity of the party leadership must be guaranteed so that the PSR would be spared by the dual domination of Central Committee and main party paper, as was the case among Social Democrats (whose party he disdainfully called a "pedantocracy" of *Iskra*). Chernov did not say how all these principles were to be applied in practical work and, especially, how the core SR conception of a party organization, namely the combination of conspiracy and democratic openness, were to be realized. A flood of epithets and paradoxical figures of speech – proclaiming that the party had a "mass character" but should also be "terrorist," "invisible," and "omnipresent," "lively" yet "concentrated" – certainly did not help in clarifying matters.[2]

6.1. The Draft: Central and Local Party Statutes

A few months later, the October Manifesto offered an opportunity to realize these ideas and to attempt a party reorganization. Chernov's concept of a connection between authoritarian and democratic elements appeared to be the best solution, especially during the "days of freedom." On the one hand, the revolutionary parties could hope for an opportunity of legal political activity secured by a constitution; on the other hand, they were aware that the victory of the revolution was not yet guaranteed and defeat was still possible. Accordingly, the draft of a party statute presented to the first party congress in December 1905 envisioned a mixed form of organization and allowed two ways for naming members to party committees: election wherever pos-

[2] [V.M. Chernov]. Organizatsionnyi vopros, in: RR No. 68 (1 June 1905), pp. 6–9., No. 69 (15 June 1905), pp. 2–5; here No. 68, pp. 7–8.

sible and appropriate, or co-optation (i.e., the continuation of the old practice) where such was advisable and unavoidable.[3] The majority of delegates approved this double strategy. But they also rejected another recommendation to divide the party into legal and illegal organizations on the grounds that this would destroy the unity of the party.[4] Along with the Central Committee, all of the speakers from local committees argued for a careful introduction of the principles of election, responsibility, and openness. At the same time, they were much more skeptical about the chances of realizing this program than was the case with Rakitnikov, Chernov, and other prominent SRs. As already noted, only the eloquent group of future People's Socialists argued for a complete rejection of conspiracy. In their view, Chernov's draft broke the promise to democratize that he made in the course of negotiations over the founding of *Syn otechestva*. But they did not win the ear of the other delegates. Rubanovich, by contrast, received enthusiastic applause when he very energetically rejected the insinuation that the leadership intended to change a revolutionary and necessarily conspiratorial party into "some kind of people's" party.[5]

The final text of the PSR's organization statute was formulated entirely in accordance with Chernov's position:

"The fundamentals that serve as a common basis for all party organizations are as follows:

(1) Universal elections, alongside which co-optation will remain, but only temporarily and only insofar as it is necessary in the interest of conspiratorial activity. (2) Active integration of all party comrades by holding open the channels of communication and informing all comrades about the condition of the party and its individual branches; reciprocal control from top to bottom and bottom to top. (3) Integration of the party on the basis of strict submission to party discipline along with the development of the basis for the independence of several party elements."[6]

Without calling the principle by name, this policy statement described the SR variant of "democratic centralism." As Chernov once again explained to the delegates, the promoters of this statute were guided by the desire to break "the vicious circle of contradictions between the abstract and contrary organizational principles" and to reconcile centralism with democracy.[7]

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[3] See, Protokoly 1906, p. 29, p. 38ff.

[4] See Protokoly 1906, p. 32.

[5] See Protokoly, p. 38.

[6] Protokoly 1906, p. 366; Paragraph 1 and 2, translated in: Bericht 1907, p. 34. Although the organizational statute was expressly described as "provisional" by the first party congress, it remained valid until December 1917. It was the fourth party congress that finally attempted a revision. See Kratkii otchet o rabotakh chetvertogo s"ezda, p. 135ff.

[7] Protokoly 1906, p. 40.

6.1.1. Construction of the Party Organization.

The organizational scheme laid down in the party statute was hardly different from that of other revolutionary parties and, indeed, was very similar to the party organization of the Social Democrats.[8] It established, as the basic party units, the territorially defined urban ("raion groups") and agrarian (the agrarian brotherhoods, "bratstva") cells. Together, they formed the next level – the "city groups" *(gorodskie gruppy)* and "county groups" (*uezdnye gruppy*) in urban and rural areas respectively. These "groups" in turn constituted the *okruzhnye organizatsii* or, because these rarely existed, immediately the *gubernskie organizatsii.* The latter combined to form regional organizations (*oblastnye organizatsii*). The activities of all these organizations were exclusively concentrated in the respective committees, i.e. the raion, city, province, and oblast committees (the latter being the highest level below the Central Committee). According to the hierarchical principle, the establishment of a new group required the approval of the next higher group.

How local organizations were to organize their internal structure was left open by the party statute. Due to the extreme variability of local conditions, the statute expressly refused to prescribe a uniform type of local organization. Unfortunately, this policy was unsuccessful; instead of flexibility and efficiency, it created only chaos. A report from Volga oblast at the end of 1906 complained that the construction of the party at the upper levels was "one way or another" making progress and here one could reasonably use the term "organization." But, he wrote, "in the local committees and especially on the periphery, " one finds only "Babylonian confusion." Not only, he continued, are committees with differing membership and functions given the same name, in many places it is even not unusual to treat as organized party members all the workers who at some time have participated in SR mass meetings. As a rule one cannot speak of systematic activity or continuous communication between the subordinate units of a local organization (Workers' Union, Propaganda Union, and so forth); nor can one even speak of a sensible division of labor. It is more often the case that the integration of all SRs in one place has lost "the last characteristics of organized solidarity."

The fourth oblast conference of the Volga area convened in July 1906 to discuss a project designed to correct these problems. This project was deemed worthy of publication in the central party paper and hence may be regarded as having an official character. According to this project, local PSR groups were to base their organizational structure on three fundamental principles. First, at all levels including the lowest, there must be a formal procedure for accepting new members, who were to be admitted only by unanimous vote. Second, all members who were admitted ac-

[8] See, Elwood, Russian Social Democracy, p. 88ff.

cording to this procedure were granted a direct vote in the elections to committees. "Mass members," by contrast, were only to have a "two or three step" indirect vote. Third, all organizational centers were to be elected. To prevent the party from losing contact with non-conspiratorial activities (notwithstanding this rigorous sealing off of membership), the Volga project recommended that SRs engage in intensive cooperation with trade unions, the All-Russian Peasant Union, and similar organizations.[9]

For the Volga project, the highest executive organ at the local level was to be the provincial committee (with half of its members elected and the other half coopted). This committee controlled all work in the province, received reports from the lower party cells, and bore responsibility for maintaining the line of communication between the higher and lower party levels as well as between local groups. The Volga organizational strategists realized that inadequate communication was the most serious danger for the ability of the party to function. They saw, correctly, that poor inner-party communication reflected an objective problem – viz., the gulf between the city and countryside. They wrote that "the basic cadres of party workers in the centers [the committees] as well as the organization itself live in the cities, while the masses live in the countryside." They suggested the establishment of mixed country (*uezd*) groups as a means to bring both groups together. It is doubtful whether this proposal would have done very much to reduce significantly the smothering dominance of the provincial capitals. The dominance of the latter was derived from the fact that not only the provincial committee but other party organizations were all centrally located in the provincial capitals. These include the "Union of Propagandists" (which was to coordinate agitation in the whole area), the editorial boards of the local SR publications, and the "Union of Organizers" (responsible for finding conspiratorial quarters, maintaining secret printing presses, and performing for other technical tasks).[10]

The provincial committees were subordinated to the oblast committees (half of whom were elected and the other half coopted). The elected members were chosen by an oblast conference of delegates from the provincial, city, and regional organizations.[11] In defining the power of the oblast committees (as the highest authority at

[9] Proekt ustava mestnykh organizatsii. Doklad IV-mu Povolzhskomu Oblastnomu s"ezdu [1–4 July 1906], in: PI No. 3 (5 December 1906), pp. 6–16, here, p. 6. For similar complaints see in Tsirkuliar O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 17 from 7 December 1907, PSR Archive 582.

[10] Proekt ustava mestnykh organizatsii, citation, p. 8. See further: Protokoly 1906, p. 366; Organizatsionnyi ustav, priniatyi 3-m s"ezdom Ts.[entral'noi] Oblasti] P.S.-R, in: PI No. 2 (25 November 1906), pp. 8–9; Ustav Nizhegorodskoi Organizatsii P.S.-R, in PI No. 4 (5 January 1907), p.7; Vremennyi ustav sel'skikh organizatsii Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. Serdobskii uezdnyi komitet [Saratovsk. gub.], PSR Archive 521/II and further similar statutes.

[11] Protokoly 1906, p. 367.

the intermediate party level), both the party statute and the Volga draft assigned them all those activities that exceeded the capabilities of the lower committees and groups as well as the special responsibility to ensure publication of a regional party paper and to offer financial-technical assistance to local periodicals. This last task was important because usually the lower level party cells were, at best, only capable of publishing brochures and flyers irregularly and on special occasions. In general, the oblast committees were to distribute finances and personnel resources as well as to serve as a point of contact between the Central Committee and the party periphery.[12]

The highest party level of executive authority was the Central Committee. It was responsible for helping the local committees to organize new party cells, to appoint editors of the central party paper and the PSR's representatives at the Bureau of the Second International, to serve as the final authority in mediating internal conflicts, to dissolve subordinate organizations because of serious offenses against party discipline,[13] and to oversee the distribution of financial and human resources. Thus the Central Committee performed the "ideal and practical leadership of the party on the basis of directives approved by the party council." It had ten members; as elsewhere, half were to be elected by the party congress and half to be coopted. Because a committee with such a limited membership could hardly be effective in accomplishing all the tasks for a party that had grown enormously since 1905, the party statute established special commissions to direct peasant, worker, and military agitation as well as produce and distribute literature.[14]

When important questions arose, the Central Committee was to consult the party council (sovet partii). The party council consisted of five Central Committee members and representatives from all the oblast committees as well as the committees of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Central Committee or one half of the oblast delegates could convoke such councils as needed. Party council decisions were binding, but could be nullified by a party congress (s"ezd partii). The latter was to consist of representatives democratically elected by a regularly constituted oblast conference representing all the recognized SR organizations. In all questions concerning program, tactics, and organization, the party congress was to be the final authority and its decisions could not be revised.[15]

[12] See a resolution of the first party council (May 1906) on the tasks of the oblast'-committees: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 17f. Further: Organizatsionnyi ustav priniatyi 3-m s"ezdom Ts.O. P.S.-R. pp. 8–9.

[13] The committee in question had the right of appeal to the party congress, which together with the Central Committee took the final decision.

[14] Protokoly 1906, p. 367f. Since 1904 I.A. Rubanovich held the office of the socialist revolutionary representative in the Bureau of the Second Socialist International.

[15] Protokoly 1906, p. 368.

6.1.2. Membership

Although the definition of membership was of decisive importance for the character of the party organization, this question did not lead to any debates at the first PSR congress. Without objection, the delegates approved the following, rather general formulation: "Every person (citizen) who recognizes the program and all the decisions of the party and belongs to any party organization is a party member."[16]

However, this resolution only deferred the discussion. It was soon clear that the organizational problems in local committees also derived from the lack of clarity in distinguishing active party members from a broader circle of sympathizers. As early as at the second party council in February 1907, the leadership felt compelled to define party membership more narrowly and thereby renewed debate about the democratic character of the PSR. The leadership had to decide whether to change the party into a cadre organization of professional revolutionaries by means of restrictive membership conditions or, for reasons of principle, preserve the remaining non-conspiratorial structures despite all the damaging effects.

The party official responsible for organizational questions argued for a "strict separation between party members who belong to the organization and those elements which are only within its sphere of influence."[17] Although this proposal signified a further isolation of the PSR, the modification in the existing definition of party membership was rather moderate. The proposal was limited itself to the question of party dues. The delegates from the Moscow and St. Petersburg committees advanced far more extensive proposals, for they wanted – similar to Lenin at the second party congress of the RSDRP – to accept as party members only those who perform "a certain function in the organization" and carry out "certain services" for the party.[18] A significant number of speakers, especially those from Russia, supported these arguments. The delegate from Vitebsk justified the need for stricter membership conditions by claiming that in his province six of the eleven electors elected with the help of the "peasant brotherhoods" and considered to be Socialist Revolutionaries had shocked the party committees by "giving black-hundredist [*chernosotennye*] speeches"[19] during the election campaign. Some, however, argued that no change was necessary. Following the position of the Legal Populists, they

[16] Bericht 1907, p. 34. In the original (Protokoly 1906, p. 367) the last sentence reads literally: "... and participates in one of its organizations."

[17] Protokoly 1907, p. 109.

[18] Protokoly 1907, p. 113f. Several local party committees had already decided to follow this policy by demanding from their members the "practical participation in party work." See Otchet o deiatel'nosti Zakavkazskogo Oblastnogo Komiteta P.S.-R. s 15. avg. po 15. okt. 1906 g., PSR Archive 628; citation from: Proekt ustava Kurskoi organizatsii P.S.-R, in: Izvestiia Kurskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 324, as well as documents from Tambov, PSR Archive 541.

[19] Protokoly 1907, p. 166.

held that the PSR should "open its doors" if it wanted to be a "mass party." The masses can accept "only the fundamental principles" of the party program and tactics.[20]

Because both positions were mutually exclusive, the party council did not undertake a thorough reform in the definition of party membership. Only the old formulation, whereby those seeking to be considered Socialist Revolutionaries were required only to "belong" to a local SR organization, was replaced by a new regulation that the candidate must be formally "accepted." The party congress further recommended that, wherever possible, membership dues were to be paid. This recommendation was not binding, however, for several delegates argued convincingly that many party members, especially peasants, were simply in no position to pay dues and hence such a recommendation would force them out of the party. The council also shelved a suggestion to require a two-thirds vote of the local organization for the admission of candidates to party membership. Still weaker was support for the demand by representatives from Moscow and St.Petersburg to introduce 'active' entrance requirements.[21] By satisfying itself with mere verbal correctives, the party congress passed up the opportunity to separate the convinced revolutionaries from sympathizers and thereby avert the problems that had triggered the whole discussion in the first place. Even in those areas where dues were collected - and this was very rare[22] – everything remained the same because most members simply did pay and hence the anticipated disciplining effect did not occur. It comes as no surprise to hear the same old complaints shortly after the second party congress. For example, the oblast committee of north Russia demanded once again that the Central Committee describe more precisely the duties that an SR had to bear before the party. It also enjoined the Central Committee to devise a binding model for local party groups.[23]

[20] Protokoly 1907, pp. 113–114.

[21] Thus the newly formulated Paragraph one of the provisional organization statute read: "Every one who approves the program and tactics of the party, subordinates himself under the instructions and discipline of the party and is accepted into one of the party's organizations is a party member. Note 1: Where possible, the local organizations raise membership dues" (Protokoly 1907, p. 132). An oblast' conference of the north Caucasus oblast' approved a similar version: Severo-Kavkazskii OK. Iz materialov k II s"ezdu [Partii, February 1907], PSR archive 758. The PSR's fourth party congress in 1917 accepted this definition even though the enormous flood of sympathizers who stormed into the party since March actually would have made stricter membership conditions necessary. see, Chernov, Great Russian Revolution, p. 393; Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 454; Kratkii otchet o rabotakh chetvertogo s"ezda P.S.-R., p. 135 ff.

[22] See below pp. 258ff.

[23] See Protokoly oblastnogo s"ezda Severnoi oblasti P.S.-R. (30 June–2 July 1907), PSR Archive 208.

6.2. The Practical Work of the Party Leadership

The PSR leadership at the national level was just as unsuccessful in realizing the policy set forth in the organization statute as the local committees. In all party institutions, the chasm between the ideal of statute and reality was very wide.

It was certainly symptomatic that the PSR held its first, founding congress in December 1905 – that is, four years after the official formation of the party. Moreover, in the following years it proved impossible to fulfill satisfactorily the provisions of the statute. Instead of convening every year, as required by the statute, the SRs held a party congress just once (in February 1907, for an extraordinary meeting). After 1907, the PSR was only able to convene a "general conference." Moreover, just a few committees sent delegates to this rump congress and, as a rule, these delegates had no democratic mandate.[24] Still more painful was the fact that the PSR's most serious crisis, the revelation that Azef was a police spy, could not be discussed by a party congress. Even the provisional solution of 1908 did not appear feasible. The party had to content itself with convening an expanded party council in which only seven voting members from Russia were able to participate (in contrast to the 48 from the previous year).[25] There were three major reasons why party congresses were convened so rarely: (1) the enormous organizational difficulties caused, above all, by the election of delegates; (2) the high costs for travel and maintenance of delegates; and, (3) surveillance by the state, which, except for the years of revolution, did not permit such conspicuous congresses. Still, these explanations are not entirely satisfactory, since the Social Democrats – who suffered under similar restrictions – were able to hold significantly more congresses.[26]

Before World War I, the PSR's party council convened on five occasions. It met for the first time in May 1906 to plan SR strategy regarding the State Duma. The second meeting in October 1906 was to reconsider the tactic of an election boycott and to resolve inner party crisis caused by the resignations of Azef and Savinkov as directors of the Fighting Organization. In July 1907, the party council met for a third time to consider the PSR response to the dissolution of the Second Duma. The fourth meeting in August 1908, parallel to the general conference in London, dis-

[24] According to the report of an apparently neutral observer, among the 48 Russian delegates approximately 16 had close contacts with the Central Committee. When one takes into account the guests and those delegates with advisory functions (i.e. those without full voting rights) then, according to this source, there were 30 persons who were unconditional followers of the party leadership. See, PSR Archive 731.

[25] Stenograficheskie otchety zasedanii V-go soveta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 792.

[26] Social Democracy held no fewer than four party congresses between 1903 and 1907. But after the revolution of 1905 the Social Democrats were also unable to convene orderly party congresses and their organization decayed along with that of the Socialist Revolutionaries. See, Elwood, Russian Social Democracy, p. 113ff.

cussed ways to stop the alarming disintegration of SR organization in Russia. The fifth meeting in May 1909 had the task of ending the Azef affair and leading the party out of the catastrophic situation that it had caused. This short review demonstrates that the party council, next to the Central Committee, was indeed the most important institution of the PSR. The party council made all of the most important political decisions, mediated all the dangerous inner party conflicts, and was the only available instrument of crisis management in moments of extreme necessity. It not only accomplished its own tasks but also performed functions that, according to the party statute, fell within the competence of the party congress. The party council assumed these functions because it was smaller, did not have to be elected, could be convened on short notice, and in general did not require a great deal of effort to organize meetings. But these advantages in flexibility made it difficult for the party council to control the Central Committee. Indeed, as an organization composed of leading SR politicians (exiles as well as those inside Russia) and thus essentially a committee of potential or former Central Committee members, the party council was essentially an adjunct executive until at least 1909. It was indeed the party council that embodied the cooptive and oligarchic element in the PSR. Thus its dominance signified the weakening of democratic structures of the PSR as embodied in its party congress.

During the pre-revolutionary period, neo-populist activities lacked a central coordination not only because of incessant attack by the Okhrana but also because of constant misunderstandings between the domestic and the exile leadership. After the promulgation of the October Manifesto, however, both hindrances were removed. The return of the émigrés provided a personnel base for the construction of a new, uniform party center as demanded by Chernov. Unfortunately, the old problems initially tended to become more serious before they could be solved. Improvisation and confusion were endless.

The seeds of this unhappy situation were already sown when the leading politicians among the returning émigrés settled not in one, but in both the capitals of Tsarist Russia. The majority around Chernov, Natanson, Kraft, Rakitnikov, Argunov, and Azef chose to live in St. Petersburg; a less important group around Sletov, Seliuk, Feit, V.V. Leonovich, talented new-comer I.I. Fundaminskii ("Bunakov"), and N.D. Avksent'ev (to name only the most famous) moved to Moscow.[27]

[27] Letter from V.M. Chernov to B.I. Nikolaevskii, NC No. 132, No. 23. According to Chernov the following also worked in Moscow: Freifel'd, Fridenson, the Old Narodnik A.V. Pribylev as well as A. Bel'skii, I.I. Mainov and Potapov from the local PSR organization. Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 267 and passim names further: Breshkovskaia, Gots, Gedeonovskii, Tiutchev, Savinkov, Zenzinov, Bonch-Osmolovskii, the police agent N.Iu. Tartarov, the veteran and terrorist A.V. Iakimova-Dikovskaia and the former "narodovolets," chemistry professor and later member of the USSR Academy of Sciences A.N. Bakh.

Thereby split, the Central Committee held separate meetings.[28] Once again the PSR was led from two centers. Given the prevailing conditions, this situation may have been unavoidable. Nevertheless, it was inexcusable that careless, *ad hoc* co-optations expanded the leading committee such that by the end of 1905 it had an unmanageable 30 members.[29] The ability of the SR leadership to manage effectively the party was seriously endangered. No one was quite sure what the leadership was doing, or even who belonged to the Central Committee – a situation that was hardly surprising, given that half the committee members were either in jail or traveling, and in any case unavailable. Argunov reports that it even was possible to forget to invite members to Central Committee meetings.[30]

The PSR's founding party congress finally brought some order into this chaos. It limited the Central Committee to ten members. By electing one half of this new Central Committee, the congress inaugurated the first democratic SR leadership when it chose Chernov (56 votes), Natanson (52 votes), Rakitnikov (49 votes), Argunov (48 votes), and Azef (46 votes). The congress also coopted Kraft and later Sletov,[31] with the remainder of the first Central Committee membership remaining unknown. It is clear that the party congress made quite an effort to elevate to the leadership representatives competent for various tasks. Thus Chernov and Rakitnikov were responsible for journalistic and theoretic-programmatic work; Natanson, Argunov, Sletov, and Kraft for organization; and Azef for the central Fighting Organization.

As required by the party statute, the second PSR party congress in February 1907 held new elections for the Central Committee and confirmed four of the previous members. It replaced Argunov with Gershuni, who surprisingly showed up before the delegates and received long and enthusiastic ovations. It was his first open appearance before the party. As far as one can tell, Avksent'ev, Argunov, Rudnev, Minor, Feit, and Breshkovskaia along with two leading figures of the PSR Moscow committee (Zenzinov and Potapov) were among those coopted to the new Central Committee.[32] The protocols for Central Committee meetings between June and November 1907 list thirteen members.[33] This fluctuation in SR leadership leads to the conclusion that repression by the state had increased markedly since early summer. But the frequency with which the same names constantly reappeared as Central

[28] See Argunov, Azef, IV, p. 178.

[29] See Chernov, Iz istorii Partii S.-R., Novyi zhurnal 101, p. 179.

[30] Argunov, Azef, IV, p. 178.

[31] See Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 268; Pamiati Sletova, p. 16. Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 245 gives the results of the voting, probably by accident, in reverse order.

[32] See Chernov, Iz istorii Partii S.-R., Novyi zhurnal 101, p. 179; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 342; Argunov, Azef, VII, p. 47.

[33] Protokoly zasedanii C.K. P.S.-R. (1 June-18 November 1907), PSR Archive 203. The initials which replaced the full names were in some cases impossible to decipher.

Committee members shows that this fluctuation took place within a small elite. In the end, the fate of the PSR lay in the hands of a few extraordinary revolutionaries – namely, Chernov, Rakitnikov, Sletov, Argunov, Natanson, Minor, Breshkovskaia, Azef, and M. Gots.[34]

The organizational activity of the Central Committee, aside from the dramatic decisions of high politics, is poorly documented and almost impossible to reconstruct. A review of the first six months of 1906 shows that its most important activity was to establish a literary commission. Starting in March 1906, this commission was to publish *Narodnyi vestnik* ("The Popular Herald"), a daily paper similar to *Syn otechestva*, and the *Biulleten' Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov* ("Bulletin of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party"). Apparently, the Bulletin was to be a new central party paper, but existed for a very short time. Only in the fall of 1906 did *Syn otechestva* find a worthy successor with the publication of *Partiinye izvestiia* ("Party News"). In addition, the Central Committee was primarily concerned with providing funds and personnel to local committees and establishing lines of communications with the party grassroots ("by means of personal connections"). But it had to admit failure in ending the "disorganization, the lack of unity in action, and the isolation" of the party.[35]

Only some delay did the PSR establish the special departments to provide central direction for the most important party activities (as prescribed by the organization statute). The first of these departments was the Central Peasant Commission under Sletov's direction, which was able to hold its first All-Russian Congress as early as September 1906.[36] At about the same time, Mikhalevich set up the Central Military Bureau; as already noted, however, this organ did not contribute much to increasing the effectiveness of SR activity. Only in the fall of 1907 could it be more closely integrated into the PSR's organization. The highest coordinating authority for the agitation among workers, the "Central Workers' Commission" (*Tsentral'naia rabochaia komissiia*), appeared to be very short lived if it existed at all. But even the Central Peasant Commission and the Central Military Bureau did not exist past the years of revolution, and in June 1907 the Central Committee felt the need to complain about the failure to establish these committees.[37]

The Organization Bureau in the Central Committee was much more effective than most other party organizations. It was in fact the most significant institutional

[34] Gershuni can be counted among this leadership only with reservations because he spent the decisive years in prison and died in 1908. As mentioned, Gots also died early from his severe sickness.

[35] Materialy dlia otcheta za ianv.-iiul'1906, PSR Archive 623.–Narodnyi Vestnik. Politicheskaia i literaturnaia ezhednevnaia gazeta. (St. Petersburg), Nos. 8–20 (17–30 May 1906).

[36] See O Tsentral'noi Krest'ianskoi Komissii, PSR Archive 691, as well as a resolution of the first party council in: Pamiatnaia knizhka. I, p. 19.

[37] Protokoly zasedanii TsK, Meetings from June and August 1907, PSR Archive 203.

reform of the socialist revolutionary party leadership during the years of revolution. The roots of the Organization Bureau, which began work in early 1906, are to be found in the committee charged with preparing the first party congress. Directed by Kraft, Leonovich, and Argunov, it was located in St. Petersburg but also had a "branch" in Moscow that essentially consisted of the Potapov couple.[38] In 1907, the direction of the Organization Bureau shifted to representatives from the younger SR generation – namely, I.N. Kovarskii, N.A. Ul'ianov, and A.B. Shimanovskii ("Savin").[39]

In general, the Organization Bureau had the task of providing central direction for administrative matters involving the PSR leadership. It bore particular responsibility for maintaining the lines of communication between the leadership and periphery. It also directed the transportation of literature, paid out money, forwarded tactical instructions from the Central Committee, informed local committees about important party matters (first through monthly bulletins, later through its own in-house paper),[40] offered its interpretation of the party statute in cases of conflict, collected the local SR publications, and received reports from committees. In short, it was the right hand and secretary of the Central Committee. Over time, the Organization Bureau increasingly came to assume control functions. According to a statute of 1907, it was to ensure not only a "stricter selection of members," tighter discipline, and observance of Central Committee directives, but it was also to clarify "the measure of usefulness of individual comrades" and take care of "eliminating those elements that could damage the party".[41] For this purpose the PSR created a special "Bureau of Agents." These agents were make regular visits to the local committees and check on their status and activities. The party grassroots found such practices more often than not as authoritarian patronization and an unjustified intrusion into their internal affairs. As a result, the Organization Bureau became the object of strong criticism.[42] In a certain sense, it appears that it changed from an organization that served the party (and hence was responsible for making the party organization more transparent by central coordination of all activities) into a bureaucratic organ charged with overseeing the party. It pushed through a one-sided flow of communication from top to bottom and isolated the Central committee from the local party groups.

[38] See Protokoly zasedanii predvaritel'no-sledstvennoi komissii pri TsK po delam o provokatsii v Partii S.-R. s 24. fevr. po 10. apr. 1909 g., NC No. 224, box I, pamphlet 1, p. 11.

[39] See V.M. Zenzinov, Pamiati V.V. Rudneva, in: Za svobodu No. 1 (May 1941), p. 58.

[40] Iz partiinykh materialov. Izd. Organizatsionnogo Biuro pri Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov (no publisher given), No. 1–5 (January–May 1907), No. 7 (June 1908).

[41] See the founding statute of the OB in the materials of the second party congress from February 1907, PSR Archive 193.

[42] See Protokoly 1908, p. 72f.

6.3. Centralism vs. Federalism: The Relationship between the Party Center and the Periphery

In the years preceding the 1905 revolution, the PSR did not succeed in overcoming the chasm between exiled intellectuals and practical workers in Russia, between the foreign and domestic leadership. The emerging dualism in party leadership, in turn, blurred the competence of several party institutions and even led to serious internal party conflicts. The return of SR politicians from exile after the October Manifest offered a chance to correct this unhappy situation. One can best observe the degree to which this schism could be overcome by looking at the intensity of communication and conflicts between the party center and the periphery.

The basic medium of communication between the Central Committee and local organizations was the central party literature, especially the central party paper. From this literature, SRs at the grassroots could find interpretations of the theoretical-programmatic principles of their party, commentary on the daily political situation, and the justification for current tactical decisions. By and large, the "transportation commission of the Central Committee" succeeded in supplying even unimportant committees with information. Nevertheless, there were certainly enough grounds for complaint. As long as the party existed, local organizations complained endlessly about the insufficient supply of literature.[43] Another common complaint concerned the delays in delivering party literature to local organizations. It often happened that literature arrived so late that it contained information no longer relevant to the current political and social situation. Finally, it also appears that certain important committees for longer periods of time actually received nothing from the party center. At the end of 1906, a letter from Chernigov stated: "Until now we not only have had no opportunity to send information to the center, but did not even know that since October of this year *Partiinye izvestiia* has been published".[44] At least in areas of core support for the PSR, such conditions were probably an extreme case and attributable to the notoriously chaotic condition of the Ukrainian regional organization. But it does illustrate a defect that, in one form or another, hindered the ability of the SR organization in many places to function effectively.

A further method of communication was the Central Committee directive informing the party grassroots of important tactical decisions. As one can see from answers to the questionnaire of the Organization Bureau in February 1907, as a rule these directives, along with other party literature, apparently did reach the intended

[43] The Organization Bureau excused itself by pointing to, among other things, transport problems and the difficulties in printing the desired literature. See Pis'mo O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 10 (23 August 1907), PSR Archive 197.

[44] K voprosu o defektakh partiinoi organizatsii, in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), pp. 3–5, here p. 3.

party organizations.[45] But the directives from the center also arrived late and often moved through random channels before finally reaching the local organizations. Surprisingly, this unsatisfactory state of affairs prevailed not only in organizations remote from the center, such as those in Irkutsk or Perm',[46] but also in organizations that presumably should have been in very close contact with the Central Committee. Thus, even the SRs from Nizhnii-Novgorod, one of the most important and active PSR committees, reported that instructions from above "never arrived on time." Similar complaints were heard from Voronezh, Orel, and other smaller groups in European Russia.[47] Because the directives often contained instructions on the short-term activity of the local organizations, in some cases such delays could seriously endanger the ability of the party as a whole to function. Lack of coordination may also provide another explanation for the failure of the PSR attempts at insurrection.

Other institutions linking the party periphery to the center were the meetings of party congresses and party council. But these institutions met so infrequently that they could only sporadically perform their function of maintaining a nexus between the center and local organizations. According to an interesting contribution to the organization debate that emanated from Chernigov, the party council did not have sufficient feedback with the party grassroots. The SRs of Chernigov, in particular, complained that the decision of the second party council to approve participation in elections to the second Duma was "completely surprising" and came without consultation with the local organizations. This decision illustrated "very clearly the justification of the accusation ... that tactical directives were given in the form of direct orders from above." Although two oblast conferences convened in October (and in the presence of authorized representatives of the Central Committee), they had not discussed the Duma question. Still worse, the delegates were not even apprised that the next party council meeting would discuss this question. In all fairness, it must be noted that these pointed accusations were not entirely justified, insofar as the accusers overlooked the referendum held by the Central Committee in the fall of 1906. With this referendum, the Central Committee sought to determine the prevailing mood in the party. Yet that by no means justified the astounding arrogance with which the editorial board of the central party paper commented on the complaints from Chernigov. Namely, it instructed the troublesome critics, in no uncertain terms,

[45] See the sources cited in Chapter 5, note 47.

[46] Irkutskii Komitet P.S.-R., Report to the Central Committee from 23 November 1908, PSR Archive 171; Permskii Komitet PSR, PSR Archive 478.

[47] Nizhegorodskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 320; Voronezhskii Komitet, anketa OB February 1907, PSR Archive 487; Mtsenskaia gruppa [Orlovsk.gub.], PSR Archive 433; Tsaritsynskaia oblast', anketa OB February 1907, PSR Archive 623; Kazanskaia gruppa S.R., anketa OB February 1907, PSR Archive 463; Kostroma, anketa OB February 1907, PSR Archive 553/1.

that life does not wait and that the party leadership had to act.[48] This attitude actually did more to justify the complaints than counter them.

More important for intra-party cohesion was personal contact between the party center and local organizations. In the early phases of the PSR's history, these contacts were established by the members of the inner-Russian Central Committee. After 1905, these contacts were institutionalized in the office of the authorized representative of the Central Committee. Although this office was not mentioned in the party statute, it was (as far as one can tell) established in every oblast committee. At the PSR's general conference in London, Chernov stated that the highest task of the representative consisted was to be "the point of contact between the oblast organization and the Central Committee." As such, the representative should respect the autonomy of local SRs but should also act as "protector of the principle of centralism."[49] In the day-to-day work of the party, the second function was probably the more important. As the founding statute of the Organization Bureau made clear, the authorized representative of the Central Committee was to oversee the work of the local committees and keep the members at the grassroots level in line.[50] These representatives were the only instruments of control for the Central Committee. They represented the Central Committee at the grassroots and, when conflicts arose, could decide in its name (with the proviso that those involved could appeal). One of the most important tasks of the Central Committee representatives was the renewal of committees that had been attacked and paralyzed by the Okhrana; in other words, these representatives had to reestablish the routine business of conspiracy, find quarters, establish printing presses, develop new sources of financing, and do much else besides.[51] The emissaries of the Central Committee were in fact a mobile rescue troop of the party center. Such a myriad of tasks demanded very high qualifications from the representatives. Indeed, as Chernov emphatically stated, they required not only versatility and talent in negotiating but also firmness and authority.[52] Thus, as a rule, only prominent party politicians from the highest ranks of the leadership could accomplish the tasks of this office. To judge by the few well-known leaders (such as Sletov, Minor, and Leonovich), it appears that another requirement was extensive experience in illegal work. The authorized representatives were therefore the hard core of the professional revolutionaries and thus, just like their opponents in the Social Democratic party, bore the main burden of organizational work and constitute one of the main supports of the PSR.

[48] K voprosu o defektakh partiinoi organizatsii, p. 4.
[49] Protokoly 1908, p. 58.
[50] Founding statute of the OB, PSR Archive 193.
[51] See Minor's ("Solomin") report on his activity as Central Committee representative in Baku, Protokoly 1908, p. 77.
[52] Protokoly 1908, p. 58.

What concrete form the relationship between the SR leadership and grass roots finally took is difficult to describe. Only an examination of several conflicts and tensions can serve to reconstruct this relationship. These conflicts derived from the confrontation between the centralism of the Central Committee and the strong federalist currents found in many local organizations. An examination of these conflicts also casts light on the decision-making process in the PSR.

The organization statute sought to combine both principles. It prescribed that, in general, the oblast committees were to act autonomously and on their own in specified spheres of competence. The Central Committee was to intervene only when a local committee violated party discipline or deviated from the party program. The relationship between the oblast committees and subordinate committees was similar. There was one difference: the oblast committee was only permitted to determine whether sufficient grounds for the dissolution of a local committee were present and, if such was the case, inform the Central Committee. But the right to impose sanctions belonged solely to the Central Committee.[53]

Reality diverged from the ideal in both possible directions. On the one hand, the party center had to combat numerous manifestations of local egoism. Local organizations were especially irritated by the requirement that they surrender part of their budget to the Central Committee and, quite often, refused to give up expropriated money. This attitude is hardly surprising when one considers the openly "anti-party" mood manifested by local "heroic" terrorists of dubious character. They believed that to "subordinate oneself to the Central Committee" was the same as "subordinating oneself to Stolypin."[54] At a meeting of SR students, a representative of the St. Petersburg committee made the heretical statement that the students should "tend" to obey the local leadership "more than the Central Committee, on the grounds that they live on territory directly administered by the local committee".[55]

On the other hand, the autonomy of local organizations was more fictitious than real. As a rule, they were too weak in personnel and finances to perform their work independently. In addition, the authorized representatives of the Central Committee apparently involved themselves far too deeply in the internal affairs of local organizations and thereby assumed rights that did not belong to them. Even the Organization Bureau, usually an energetic proponent of the centralist principle, had to admit in November 1907, "that the local and oblast committees in some cases more or less correctly feel that they have been ignored." The relationship between dele-

[53] The oblast'-committee of the north west oblast protested against this rule, but apparently without success. See Pis'mo O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 15 (1 November 1907), PSR Archive 197; Protokoly zasedanii oblastnogo soveshchaniia Severo-Zapadnoi Oblasti (11–13 November 1907), PSR Archive 426.

[54] See a report on the expropriation of a post office in Sevastopol' in 1907, PSR Archive 488.

[55] See Iu. N., 12 October 1907, PSR Archive 168.

gates from the Central Peasant Bureau and the Central Military Bureau were cause for special complaint because they had "their own sources of material existence independent from the local committees" and hence ignored the opinions and plans of local SRs. To avoid such misunderstandings in the future, the Organization Bureau made a binding interpretation of the regulations of the organization statute that, to a high degree, accentuated the rights of local committees: "The party workers sent by the center to the local level unquestionably must subordinate themselves to the general rules, but especially the following: in the area of their special activity, they can assume a degree of technical autonomy determined by the general party law at the given locality; but they remain in the same relationship to the committee as all other party workers." At the same time the Organization Bureau warned the guilty parties, primarily the Central Peasant Committee and the Central Military Bureau, not to think that they were somehow "organization centers." Their task was the "preparation of general plans of work and projects." The direction and coordination of all party activities was to remain solely with the Organization Bureau, which henceforth desired to communicate its plans and intentions, and above all the inspection tours of the authorized representatives, in a more timely manner to the oblast and local committees.[56]

Even though such vexation was apparently widespread, it does not seem to have risen to the level of open conflict. Even imperious interventions by the center, such as the dissolution of the Moscow committee in the fall of 1907 or the reprimand of the Volga oblast committee in July 1906 (for relieving the Saratov committee of its duties without due cause),[57] did not provoke much resistance. Only in one known case involving a long-term conflict was the internal party order seriously endangered, at least regionally.

Due to massive financial support from the Moscow opposition, in 1906 Maximalism became widespread in the north Caucasus, especially in Stavropol', and culminated in a wave of expropriations and extortion. To combat effectively such pseudo-revolutionary signs of decay, which indeed inflicted serious damage to the party, the oblast committee decided to impose the death penalty. In the fall of 1907 the oblast committee secretary was proven guilty of extortion and sentenced to death, the plenipotentiary of the Central Committee interceded and pointed out that the Central Committee had forbidden the death penalty. The oblast committee, however, refused to recognize his veto: it denied knowing any such Central Committee decision, cited the party statutes (which permitted the party leadership to intervene only in disciplinary matters), and noted that the Central Committee had failed to

[56] Pis'mo O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 16 from 15 November 1907, PSR Archive 168.

[57] Zinaida Zhuchenko. Iz vospominanii A.V. Pribyleva. Izd. Byloe (no publisher, no date of publication), p. 23, 42; Rospusk Saratovskogo komiteta P.S.-R., July 1906, PSR Archive 521/II.

use an oblast conference to block the introduction of the death penalty. The Central Committee representative, however, insisted upon his position and dismissed the oblast committee for insubordination. After both sides asked the Central Committee to mediate the dispute, the Central Committee ruled in favor of its representative, upheld his order, and dissolved the oblast committee. This conflict confirmed the party leadership's unquestioned authority as well as its will and ability to ensure obedience. With good reason, however, one can doubt the justice and legality of its hard judgment, for the party statute did not authorize its plenipotentiary to remove an oblast committee. Still more serious was the fact that the Central Committee based its decision on the impermissible use of the death penalty: by its own admission, it had informed the party of such a ruling because the leadership did not believe that the time was ripe. Moreover, since it had allowed the SRs in the north Caucasus to introduce such drastic measures without objection, the Central Committee's harsh actions against the oblast committee afterwards was hardly a sign of self-confidence and impartiality. Instead, one sees an extremely centralist leadership style that tended toward arbitrary authoritarianism.[58]

The Central Committee displayed a similar attitude in September 1907 during the attempted revolt in Sevastopol'. The party leadership did not even pretend to respect the autonomy of the local committees. The Central Military Bureau, supported by the Central Committee, gave the direct order to ignore local Socialist Revolutionaries. It informed its authorized representative that about two thirds of the local party members would approve of the rising and that, if the rest objected, this was "unimportant," and that, "so far as the oblast committee of the Southern Oblast is concerned, it can be completely forgotten." Thus the planned mutiny served not only to document the political blindness of the SR leadership in the later phase of the revolution but also illustrated an almost dictatorial style of leadership that imperiously ignored the rights of local organizations anchored in the party statute. Thus it was certainly understandable that the SRs in Sevastopol' lost their faith in internal party democracy and bitterly announced that henceforth they would prefer to defend their own egoistic interests "with all possible means" than ever again submit to directives from above.[59]

As a result of these incidents, it was not surprising that tensions – similar to those between simple party members and the *komitetchiki* – became evident between SRs in the leadership and those at the grass roots.[60] The vehement accusation against

[58] See a presentation of the conflict by the Central Committee's authorized representative as well as a letter from the oblast'-committee to the Central Committee and the decision of the party leadership in PSR Archive 623. Also Protokoly 1908, p. 59.

[59] Dokladnaia zapiska Tsentral'nomu Komitetu P.S.-R. o popytke k vooruzhennomu vystupleniiu v Sevastopole v sentiabre 1907 g., and: Doklad o vooruzhennom vosstanii, both in PSR Archive 553/II.

[60] For this see below p. 246ff.

party leadership as an oligarchy, which had been first raised by the Moscow opposition, found increasing acceptance. The sensitivity against any form of paternalistic intervention by the central leadership grew markedly. A Siberian oblast conference certainly did not speak only for itself when it demanded, in a rather direct manner, that the Central Committee "completely terminate inspections of local activities by the authorized representatives" and that it "limit the authority of all representatives of the central organization" in order to promote "a broader democratization."[61] Similarly, the SRs of Simferopol' suggested to the party hierarchy that it review the functions of the its representatives and that these be reduced to "simple mediators."[62]

The level of unrest in the PSR's lower ranks was first made fully clear to the leadership by the comments of an invited guest at the general conference in London in August 1908. He reported that, behind the backs of the Central Committee and the Organization Bureau, there was much talk that the party had been perverted into a "bureaucratic organization, where the higher-ups were insulted in their absence but, as soon as they were present, everyone would remain silent." The Organization Bureau was a special problem. The guest complained that "the Organization Bureau does not miss a single letter, not one comrade, not one paper ... It is the eye, ear, and hand of the Central Committee. The Central Committee alone remains the head and, although it is a rather good head, it is not sufficient. And the members of the Organization Bureau are not very numerous. They cannot do everything and so the result is formalistic procedures ... They are called autocrats, ... [and] it is said that the Organization Bureau is now more important than the Central Committee."

The plenipotentiaries, those "officials of the Central Committee for special tasks," played the role of "general-governors" over the lower party groups. There was only one way to protest against their actions – viz., "through the Organization Bureau." One could correct all these problems if, in the future, the members of the Organization Bureau were not appointed by the Central Committee but elected by a party congress.[63]

As usual, Chernov responded to this critique with a mixture of empty, but glittery rhetoric and real arguments. He claimed without reservation that the reality corresponded to the ideal of the relevant party statutes. By processing the Central Committees paperwork and maintaining lines of communication with SR groups at the grassroots, the Organization Bureau was merely doing what the party asked of it. Indeed, the Organization Bureau had the task of relieving the party leadership of petty, routine work. Moreover, Chernov denied knowing of any case where the

[61] Postanovienie konferentsii Sibirskoi oblasti [no date], PSR Archive 756.
[62] Simferopol'. Doklad po organizatsionnomu voprosu, zaslushennyi na gubernskom s"ezde Tavricheskogo Soiuza, PSR Archive 749.
[63] Protokoly 1908, p. 73.

Organization Bureau had prevented a request from reaching the Central Committee. He also dismissed the charge of formalism as completely groundless and declared that, if anything, the PSR suffers from too little, not too much, regulation. He vehemently rejected the suggestion that the Organization Bureau henceforth be elected, for that would really create a second center in the party.[64]

Which of the two positions came closest to describing the reality in the party is difficult to determine. In any case, the Central Committee's opponents did belong to the party's left wing but probably should not be counted among the Paris opposition,[65] and numerous incidents support their complaints. Nevertheless, Chernov was correct in arguing that one could not speak of too much formalism in the PSR but rather of too little. At the same time, a deficiency of formal procedures by no means prevented the creation of authoritarian structures. Precisely because the party statute was not effectively enforced (left the hierarchy far too many holes) and because independent activity at the party grassroots was too weak, authority did definitely drift toward the party center and make the organization top-heavy. Lack of participation by the lower party groups was equally due to insufficient institutionalization and to smothering domination by the Central Committee.

The author of a very intelligent article understood the cause of the PSR's ailments. Written at the high point of the organizational woes (following Azef's exposure at the beginning of 1909), this article addressed the question whether the PSR had too much, or too little centralism by arguing that it actually suffered from both. "As an organization created from above, the party has tendencies toward extraordinary centralism," and this was especially true for committees in the main cities and those close to the Central Committee. But the mass of SR committees in the remote provinces had arisen independently of party leadership and on the sole responsibility of the local party members. Their contact with the Central Committee was never very strong; it was not uncommon for them to learn about meetings of a party congress two or three days in advance. The author summed up his argument thus: "The center and the organizations close to it lived their own life, as if they were the core of the party; all the other numerous socialist revolutionary organizations created from below and dispersed over the entire face of Russia did not share the life of the entire party, even if counted as part of the party." The Central Committee lived separately not only from the masses but in no less degree from the marginal groups inside the party. The author made the very astute observation that the Central Committee was ultimately responsible for this state of affairs, for – even before the Azef Affair – the PSR had be-

[64] See Protokoly 1908, p. 89f.
[65] See below p. 307f.

come "frozen."[66] Expressed in another way, the PSR could not overcome the existing dualism between the center and the periphery even in the years of revolution.

[66] E.R. [Evgeniia Ratner?], Organizatsionnye nedochety, in: Izvestiia Oblastnogo Zagranichnogo Komiteta (citation: IOZK) No. 11 (May 1909), pp. 2–8, citation p. 5, p. 6. The Central Committee conceded the correctness of this critique out of Russia without reservation and confirmed the existence of a twofold chasm between the several levels of the party organization on the one hand and between the party and the masses on the other. But it rejected all responsibility for this situation and maintained that the isolation is "a deficiency of the organization, a failure of the party but not of a part of it." (PSR Archive 758/9).

CHAPTER 7

The PSR at the Grassroots: Activities and Organization of Local Committees in the Russian Revolution of 1905–1907

Whereas the PSR before 1905 was a small party of conspirators with a limited membership, after "Bloody Sunday" it was transformed into a mass movement. An enormous flood of new members streamed into the SR local committees. So great was this tidal wave of new members that it simply overwhelmed the local committees. The party grew "overnight", "in hours not in days."[1] The party profited more than its Social Democratic competitor from the political mobilization of ever-broader sections of the population. The crisis of state created conditions whereby more and more people were willing to engage in revolutionary politics.

Aside from the centers of Neo-Populism, the great majority of SR committees dated the beginning of their "systematic work" to the first half of 1905. It was only from this time that the word organization had any meaning at the grassroots level of the PSR. Because the local committees had more tasks to accomplish, the establishment of special committees was necessary. Indeed, a general functional differentiation was required. The most visible expression and most important result of this

[1] According to a leading party member; see Spiridovich, Partija S.-R, p. 165.

process were the creation of twelve regional organizations (*oblastnye organizatsii* or *soiuzy*, in short *oblasti*). Specifically, these included oblast organizations in the north (1906), northwest (1904), the central industrial area (1906), Ukraine (1906), south Russia (1906), Don-Azov area (1906), northern and far Caucasus area (1906), the Volga region (1905), Urals (1906), Siberia (1906), and Turkestan (1906). The short-lived "Far Eastern Union of the PSR" led a special existence.

Naturally, the local party organizations could not achieve the same effects in all areas. The local committees concentrated on different problem areas depending on geographic conditions, socio-economic structure, political tradition and the strength of Social Democracy, to name just a few of the most important variables. Despite the impressive volume of the existing sources, there are unfortunately significant chronological gaps. For the most part these sources offer us only a limited picture of the extremely changeable conditions at the grass roots of the PSR (membership data, the number of the villages or factories that were the target of agitation and so on). Continuous, comprehensive reports, and presentations of the contents of committee activities are rare. Nevertheless, we shall try to synthesize the existing information into a halfway consistent picture. In the course of this investigation three aspects of the activities of the local committees shall be compared and emphasized: first, the condition of the agitation of the workers; then the agitation of the peasants; and finally the inner structure of the local organizations. It was especially the problem of organizational structure that was often the cause of conflict because the vast increase in membership gave the old questions of inner-party democracy and the relationship between the local committee and the masses an immediacy that it did not have before.

7.1. Agitation in the City and Countryside: a Survey

7.1.1. The Volga Area

The most important SR regional organization was, without question, the Volga oblast. One can rightly say that Saratov, Penza, and Tambov provinces constituted the core zone of the PSR. The neo-populist movement arose here, and the majority of the party leaders – including Argunov, Avksent'ev, Chernov, Kraft, Lazarev, Minor, Rakitnikov, and Sletov – came from this region. The vitality of a long agrarian tradition, the extensiveness of the *obshchina*, and the economic crisis of the countryside[2] – all this helped give the PSR a virtual monopoly in agitation among the peasants. Even in the cities, the party's position was stronger in this area than anywhere else in Russia. This region had the most extensive distribution of SR peasant organizations

[2] See Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, p. 29ff.

and supplied the party with most of its members.[3] Thus the Volga area had a major role in party life and was especially influential in all party committees and in the party's decision-making process.

Preparations to establish a PSR regional organization were already underway at the end of 1904. In March 1905, the first oblast meeting convened, with representatives from committees in Kazan', Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov, Astrakhan', Penza, Tambov, Orenburg, and Nizhnii-Novgorod.[4] The PSR's first party congress at the end of 1905 determined the final borders of each oblast. Thus the Volga area included the provinces of Saratov, Samara, Simbirsk, Kazan', Astrakhan', Penza, Tambov, and Orenburg.[5] In October 1906 the largest SR organization in the Volga area was Penza, which had 1,050 members. Ranking next (in the order of membership) was Saratov (with 1,018 members); significantly fewer members were reported for Simbirsk (597), Tambov (580), and Samara (500). When one considers the number of *intelligenty* as an indication of the capacity of a local committee to function effectively (and there is much to recommend that view), Saratov ranked at the top (with 200), followed by Penza (150), Kazan' (140), and Samara (100).[6] Although care should be used in evaluating these figures (since the criterion for defining a member varied considerably from one committee to the next), they nevertheless give some idea of the approximate size of the PSR's local committees.

Work in Cities

Socialist Revolutionaries in the Volga area dedicated only limited resources to agitation among the workers. One reason for this inattention was that, in this barely industrialized region, only the western provinces had a proletariat worthy of the name. Another factor was the strong competition presented by the RSDRP in areas

[3] In computing the numbers of mandates for the second extraordinary party congress, the number each local committee could send was proportional to its membership strength. The Volga area sent 30 delegates and thus it had the strongest delegation at the party congress. Next came the central oblast with 20 delegates; the Ukraine with 18; the south oblast, 14; the northwest oblast, 14; the northern oblast, 8; the far Caucasus area, 6; the north Caucasus and Turkestan, 4 each; the city committees from St. Petersburg and Moscow, 6 and 5 delegates respectively. See Protokoly [vtorogo] soveta partii, PSR Archive 489.

[4] See Ot povolzhskogo Soiuza P.S.-R., May 1905, PSR Archive 468 as well as the French edition of the PSR's report to the Congress of the Second International in 1907 in Stuttgart which contains a summary of the activity reports from the local committees to the PSR's second party congress of February 1907: Rapport du Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire de Russie au Congrès Socialiste International de Stuttgart (aout 1907). (Genève, 1907), pp. 53–192, here p. 85ff. Important for the history of the Volga oblast see further: Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia. Nachalo obrazovaniia P.O. organizatsii, PSR Archive 468.

[5] Protokoly 1906, p. 306.

[6] See Volga: Chislo chlenov partii, po dannym soobshchennym predstaviteliami organizatsii na oblastnom s"ezde, in the materials of the PSR's second party council from October 1906, PSR Archive 489.

where conditions for the PSR agitation among workers appeared better. The PSR could have overcome both hurdles but decided to concentrate its efforts on the peasants, for it judged the expected results in the countryside to be greater and far more important for the party. Notwithstanding this strategic decision to concentrate on the peasantry, the party was nonetheless present in lower and middle classes in the cities.

The SRs in Kazan' claimed to have organized about 100 workers in three factories, three printing presses, and a few workshops. They also claimed to have attracted a remarkable number of secondary-school students to the party. As a result, the Kazan' committee claimed to have "rather significant influence" on the local "society."[7] The PSR also worked hard, and with some success, in Penza to win support from the working class, although here too it laid special emphasis on agitation among the peasants. The party not only founded educational circles in three factories but was also able to gain significant influence among urban artisans and the union of the shop employees and salesclerks. The party's greatest strength was in the railway depots, where more than 200 workers were organized. The depots soon became secure bastions of Neo-Populism. In elections to the second Duma, the SRs won more votes than the Social Democrats (although, notwithstanding this result, Social Democrats were the electors at provincial level).[8] The PSR had serious problems in Simbirsk: since this province had virtually no factories, the party had to limit itself to agitation among artisans, the urban middle stratum, and the petty townspeople *meshchane*.[9]

In Tsaritsyn the PSR represented almost "all the artisans," had a presence in "most factories," formed ten factory committees and numerous "circles" (*kruzhki*), and claimed to have organized 245 workers. "In view of the complete absence of the Social Democrats," the PSR not only had a decisive influence on the local trade unions but even had the remarkable (and rare) success of placing its men in the union leadership – especially in the Executive Committee of the Railway Union, which was "almost completely socialist revolutionary." What must not be overlooked, however, is that these successes were not so much due to the efforts of local party members but rather to the energy of the "traveling professionals." The local activists had "insufficient knowledge" to accomplish these tasks alone.[10] In elections to the second Duma, more Tsaritsyn workers voted for SRs than SDs (although most, however, voted for Kadets).[11] The Socialist Revolutionaries could boast similar successes in

[7] Kazanskaia gruppa S.R., Response to a survey of the OB from February 1907, PSR Archive 463 and further documents in the PSR Archive 122, 463.

[8] Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia, PSR Archive 468; Penzenskaia guberniia, response to a OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 471; as well as further documents in PSR Archive 471, 758/9.

[9] Kratkii otchet, February 1907, Simbirskii komitet, PSR Archive 623. See also: Simbirskii komitet. Otvety po voprosam ankety O.B., PSR Archive 623 and further documents therein.

[10] Tsaritsynskaia oblast, anketa O.B. pri Ts.K., February 1907, PSR Archive 623.

[11] Tsaritsyn. Vyborshchiki, PSR Archive 623.

Astrakhan'. Not only could they point to 170 organized workers but also to their "exclusive influence" on the local unions, especially the unions of the masons, carpenters, postal and telegraph personnel, and shop employees. Hence it is no surprise that the SRs did well in elections to the second Duma, with urban and rural electoral districts returning a majority of SR electors.[12]

In Saratov, the secret capital and the mecca of Neo-Populism, the SRs also had solid bases in the urban raions. When one considers the importance and tradition of the Saratov organization, however, its influence seemed less dominant than one might have expected. During the worker unrest in January 1905, for example, the SRs more or less had to allow the Social Democrats a free hand in the strike committees.[13] Even in this center of PSR strength, the party had to wait until 1906 before it could establish a workers' center – an organization of propagandists and similar groups essential for systematic agitation. As late as May 1906, the party could only count 90 workers and 75 to 100 artisans as organized.[14] By the beginning of 1907, this number rose to a total of about 300 members from the urban underclass.[15]

If, despite certain deficiencies, the PSR in Saratov could be satisfied with the results of its work among the working class, that was not the case in Samara. It is indeed surprising that, in the largest industrial center on the middle Volga, the PSR could not establish itself in any factory and had to limit its activities to "a few large workshops" and the "sausage-makers and the cabinet-makers."[16] The party here enjoyed wide sympathy only in the train depots.[17] This conclusion is all the more surprising because the PSR's agitation as a whole was "rather effective."[18] Due to the extraordinary propagandistic abilities of the three leading figures (S.N. Kallistov, V.P. Troitskii, and M.A. Vedeniapin),[19] at least by the end of 1905 the party's influence among the revolutionary intelligentsia, high-school students, employees of small shops, the "revolutionary petit-bourgeoisie," and the peasantry was "without question very great."[20] At the apogee of the revolution, it was SRs who shaped political life in Samara. Their influence was especially great because the overwhelming

[12] Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia, PSR Archive 468.

[13] See Chemu uchit Saratovskaia zabastovka. Saratovskii Komitet. 27 January 1905, PSR Archive 521/II, and further flyers of the "Saratovskii Rabochii Soiuz P.S.-R.", therein as well as documents in 521/I.

[14] Protokol Gubernskogo s"ezda predstavitelei organizatsii S.R., konets maia 1906, PSR Archive 521/II.

[15] Rapport 1907, p. 96.

[16] Samarskii komitet, Report to the second party council, October 1907, PSR Archive 623, as well as further documents in 623.

[17] Speranskii, 1905 god v Samarskom krae, p. 162.

[18] Speranskii, 1905 god v Samarskom krae, p. 326.

[19] Vedeniapin soon climbed the heights of socialist revolutionary leadership and between 1917 and 1922 he was one of the most prominent politicians in the party. See RR No. 21–22 (October–November 1922), pp. 25–26.

[20] Speranskii, 1905 god, p. 162.

majority of the soldiers in the local garrison stood with the PSR.[21] Among Samara's working class, however, the party found only limited resonance and failed to break the dominance of Social Democrats. Unfortunately, even the brilliance of SR success in "society" faded very rapidly, as almost the entire committee fell victim to the state reprisals for terror. Thus the attacks of the "heroes of revenge" served to "disorganize" their own party.[22] So effective was the Okhrana's counter-offensive that, as far as we can tell, it left the PSR in Samara paralyzed for the remainder of the revolution.[23]

Agitation among the Peasantry

Aside from the steppes around Astrakhan' on the lower Volga, the less important province of Orenburg,[24] and the region around Kazan' (where the large number of non-Russian nationalities – above all, Tatars) created special problems for the PSR,[25] SR agitation among the peasantry was more successful here than anywhere else in Russia. According to statistics prepared by the all-Russian conference of SR "peasant workers" in Imatra (September 1906), the PSR's "zone of influence" encompassed all the *uezdy* in Samara, Saratov, and Simbirsk provinces as well as eight out of the ten *uezdy* in Penza province. The largest absolute numbers of volosti and settlements "where work is being done" were found in the provinces of Penza, Saratov, and Simbirsk. By far the most peasant organizations (i.e., "brotherhoods" and "volost' committees") were in Saratov province, with Penza occupying second place.[26]

A closer examination, however, reveals that such data frequently served to camouflage the real situation. Socialist revolutionary activities in the Volga provinces were less than satisfactory. If one looks not at the larger administrative centers (such as the province and uezd), but rather the volost' and village, one finds that even in Penza the SRs had contacts to virtually all the volosti in but one uezd. In the next most successful county, local committee had ties with barely half of the volosti, while in other counties they had contact with merely 64 percent, 37 percent, and 36 percent of the volosti. When we go one administrative level deeper, the previously impressive figures lose their entire former luster. Even in the uezd with the most SR strongpoints (which characteristically were closest to the provincial capital), only 38 percent of all population settlements, hardly more than a third, had been introduced

[21] For details see Speranskii, 1905 god, p. 198ff.

[22] See Speranskii, 1905 god, p. 372.

[23] Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia, PSR Archive 468.

[24] See Orenburg, Response to an OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 460; ZT No. 36 (June 1911), p. 29; Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia. PSR Archive 468.

[25] See Rapport 1907, p. 89f.

[26] See a table in: Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, predstavlennye na s"ezde krest'ianskikh rabotnikov v sentiabre 1906 g., PSR Archive 122.

to SR ideas. In the next four most successful uezdy, the figures were much smaller: 25 percent, 26 percent, 26 percent, and 27 percent. On average, SR agitation had reached just 17.5 percent of all villages in Penza province. This was indeed a low percentage. It therefore should come as no surprise that, among the 53 members of all SR uezd groups, a grand total of four were peasants, three of whom belonged to one uezd.[27] We may conclude from this data that in Penza province the PSR at best could conduct agitation among peasants but could not integrate them into its organization and win them over as active members. The committees everywhere were composed almost exclusively of *intelligenty*. In the rest of Russia, the situation was even worse.

To the superficial observer, the condition of SR peasant organization in Saratov province appeared to be better than in Penza. Traveling propagandists and agents could even claim to have achieved here the "best performance" in the entire country. According to the report to a provincial conference in May 1906, Atkarsk uezd had the most SR peasant organizations (25 brotherhoods) in all Russia. Balashov uezd (15 brotherhoods and a committee of 20 agitators) ranked a close second. Other uezdy boasted that they had made the village population in many areas up to 90-percent "conscious."[28] A former "travelling agent" in the Atkarsk uezd reported that local party organizations were apparently even led by peasants.[29]

Despite such advanced mobilization of the agrarian population, the relatively impressive successes, and the favorable conditions as a whole, in the summer of 1906 Saratov province gave more cause for complaint over difficulties than jubilation over what had been achieved. Atkarsk uezd suffered from a deficiency of committees; Petrovsk uezd did not have enough traveling agents; Saratov spoke only of "bad news about the level of organization of the peasants."[30] These deficiencies became much more serious in the end phase of the revolution and compelled activists to take a critical retrospective. When in 1907 in Atkarsk uezd ("the most organized in the entire province of Saratov") it was no longer possible "to get answers to questionnaires because no peasant risked writing,"[31] and when even during the high tide

[27] See the detailed table in: Otchet o Penzenskoi gubernii [at the All-Russian Conference of Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators in Imatra, September 1906], PSR Archive 122.

[28] See Protokol Gubernskogo s"ezda predstavitelei organizatsii S.-R. Konets maia 1906, PSR Archive 521/II with very detailed and instructive reports on the state of work in the individual "uezdy." Also: Saratovsk. gub., Report at the All-Russian Conference of the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators in Imatra, September 1906, PSR Archive 122.

[29] A. Studentsov, Saratovskoe krest'ianskoe vosstanie 1905 goda. Iz vospominanii raz"ezdnogo agitatora. (Penza, 1926), p. 18ff. For general observations see also: T. Galynskii, Ocherki po istorii agarnoi revoliutsii Serdobskogo uezda, Saratovskoi gubernii, (Serdobsk, 1924), p. 53, p. 55 and passim.

[30] Protokol Gubernskogo s"ezda ..., PSR Archive 521/II, p. 3.

[31] Doklad o polozhenii raboty v krest' ianstve, Atkarskoi Gruppy P.S.-R., 20 February 1908, PSR Archive 125.

of revolution agitators in many areas did not dare to attack the tsar openly,[32] the roots of these problems certainly lay deeper than in simple police repression. The SRs in Atkarsk saw the cause of their problems in the "superficial acquaintance of the village population with revolutionary ideas" and an "excessive estimation of the strength, means, and working conditions of the party." When one judges the situation of the PSR soberly and realistically, the party was in no position to influence effectively the revolutionary movement in the countryside during 1905–1906. The revolutionary movement of 1905–1906 was more a product of the dissatisfaction caused by the war with Japan. The party had merely attached itself to a movement unleashed by the war. The party agitation did not sink deeply into the consciousness of the peasants. The "complete collapse" of the SR village organizations in 1907 should be explained by these failures and the backward consciousness of the peasants.[33]

Indeed, the collapse of the PSR appeared to be extraordinarily rapid in the Volga area. In February 1907, the committee in Penza reported that "almost no"[34] peasant groups existed. During an inspection tour in October the same year, a Central Committee representative discovered either "arrests and collapse" or "organizations that had only begun, with great effort, to recover from police raids."[35]

It should not be forgotten that, despite all the deficiencies of SR activity, the RSDRP outside cities in the Volga area was not only even less effective but in fact hardly present at all. For example, when SD agitators at a peasant conference in the Saratov uezd demanded the establishment of a non-party peasant organization, the peasants objected that "the Social Democrats could not participate in this organization, because they did not share the basic principles of the peasant union – namely, namely that land should not be private property"[36].

7.1.2. Ukraine

The regional organization of Ukraine was founded in April 1905 at the initiative of the PSR's Central Committee. With the consolidation of the Kiev, Khar'kov, Voronezh, Poltava, and Volhynia committees, the Ukrainian organization embraced the provinces of Kiev, Poltava, Khar'kov, Ekaterinoslav, Chernigov, Volhynia, Kamenets-Podol'sk, Kursk, and Voronezh.[37] The Ukraine organization was second

[32] Studentsov, Saratovskoe krest'ianskoe vosstanie, p. 5.

[33] Doklad o polozhenii raboty, PSR Archive 125.

[34] Penzenskaia guberniia, February 1907, PSR Archive 471.

[35] S Povolzh'ia, in: ZT No. 8 (December 1907), pp. 11–12; also: Kratkii ocherk sostoianiia partiinykh organizatsii v Povolzh'e, in: ZT No. 8 (December 1907), pp. 12–13.

[36] Protokol Gubernskogo s"ezda, PSR Archive 521/II, p. 4.

[37] Protokoly 1906, p. 304; See also the founding proclamation: Oblastnaia organizatsiia na Ukraine P.S.-R., PSR Archive 482, as well as: RR No. 73 (15 August 1905), p. 27. For the history of the PSR's

only to the Volga in numerical strength, in its political weight in the party, and in its general strategic importance for the SR cause. Not only did the neo-populist movement in Ukraine, where the "Southern Union" (one of the two roots of the PSR) had been founded in the 1890s, look back to a long tradition but was also the epicenter of the agrarian revolution, especially in the provinces of Chernigov, Poltava, Kursk, and Voronezh. The unrest in Poltava and Khar'kov in 1902 was an early signal of the emerging agrarian revolution. It was here in the central agricultural area that population pressures were the greatest and the land was scarcest. In 1861, the peasants not only had to accept an above-average reduction of the land that they had previously tilled, but also had to earn the land promised under agrarian reform by laboring daily for their former landowners, thus continuing the old form of bondage even after the formal emancipation from serfdom. This system of "working-off" was deemed necessary because most peasants could not pay for the land received under the agrarian reform; moreover, some form of compensation had to be found for the losses suffered by the former owners. As a result, Ukraine was an area of chronic crisis in Russian agriculture.[38] Because the *obshchina* was also common in Ukraine, SR propaganda fell on fertile soil. Land-poor, hard-pressed by hunger and exploitation, *obshchina* peasants in northern Ukraine were very receptive to a party that propagated the socialization of the land.

In the Ekaterinoslav area, the PSR faced other conditions, for this was an important center of heavy industry and mining. The structure of agriculture was also very different here from that in the northern provinces: the large urban markets and the more favorable location (i.e. the proximity to the Black Sea) led to the formation of a relatively strong class of middle peasants who produced for the market.[39]

Agitation in the Cities

By and large, the agitation among workers held a low priority for SRs in Ukraine. It was primarily the committees of the northern provinces that concentrated their efforts almost exclusively in the countryside. SRs in Chernigov that their urban organization played "no role" there[40] and that, apart from secondary-school students and the intelligentsia, local activists focused primarily on the 2,000 artisans and employees of small shops (given the lack of factories). A second target of special interest was the migrant worker, such as the masons and bricklayers coming to the

Ukrainian oblast-organization see the comprehensive: Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainskoi oblasti, PSR Archive 482; Rapport 1907, p. 149ff.

[38] See Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, p. 44ff; very detailed: Bensidoun, L'agitation paysanne, p. 21ff. For the expansion of the "obshchina": Atkinson, The Russian Land Commune, p. 4.

[39] Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, p. 80ff.

[40] Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482.

city in winter. Although a "Workers Union" was founded in Chernigov, with only 150 to 200 members even as late as the second half of 1906 it remained "rather weak."[41] The same situation obtained in Kursk, where the PSR was active mainly among "small artisans" and railway workers. At the beginning of 1907, the local committee reported that it had organized almost 90 workers. The party was also present in the printers' union. More than in Chernigov, the party had some success in politicizing the soldiers of the local garrison.[42]

The SRs in Khar'kov, by contrast, boasted of "many contacts" with the army. In general, they estimated that their influence was "great" among the "progressive" elements of the city. This influence was largely due to the almost 500 organized workers that were counted as party activists by the summer of 1906.[43] The PSR enjoyed special favor among railway workers and the postal and telegraph employees, further among artisans like shoemakers and hat-makers as well as among printers.[44] Unfortunately, the report on activities presented to the second party council in February 1907 contained little to encourage the congress delegates. Not the least of the troubles of the SR committee in Khar'kov were the especially bitter conflicts with the Maximalists, conflicts that tore the local committee asunder.[45] Finally, in Voronezh, where a neo-populist group had existed since 1895, the PSR was able to establish some bases in the factories and to found a "Workers Union" that by early 1907 had 80 members. In addition, the party also assumed direction of the unions for railway workers and for the postal and telegraph employees.[46]

The SRs in southern Ukraine and Kiev paid more attention to agitation in the working class. The PSR in Kiev could look back to a long tradition of working-class agitation. Indeed, the first neo-populist circles assembled around D'iakov had tried to address above all the proletariat. Gershuni and S.V. Balmashev linked the largest SR organization in Ukraine to this tradition and led its early phase of growth. However, due to the prudence of the chief of the local Okhrana and later personal security

[41] According to Ukraintsev, 7 July [1906?], PSR Archive, Archive 482. See above all: Otchet o deiatel'nosti Chernigovskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. i o polozhenii del v gubernii (k. 1. ianv. 1907 g.) in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), pp. 12–13, Original: PSR Archive 482; similar: Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482.

[42] Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482. See also an answer to an OB survey from February 1907 and reports in Izvestiia Kurskogo Komiteta No. 1 (1 February 1907) in PSR Archive 482 and 324.

[43] Khar'kov, 29 June [1906?], PSR Archive 482.

[44] Konferentsiia Khar'kovskii Gubernskoi organizatsii P.S.-R., December 1907, PSR Archive 63/23.

[45] See K. Galkin, Anarkhistskie i terroristicheskie gruppy v Khar'kove: L. Tkachukov, Kak likvidirovalsia 1905 god v Khar'kove, in: Puti revoliutsii. (Khar'kov, 1925) No. 1, pp. 27–36 with information on the personnel and composition of the Socialist Revolutionary Organization in Khar'kov.

[46] Response of the Voronezh Committee to an OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 487; Iz otcheta Voronezhskogo Komiteta, in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), pp. 6–7.

representative of the tsar, General A.I. Spiridovich, this phase ended in 1902.[47] A new growth phase began just two years later and, for the most part, involved university students with SR inclinations. A strong group of workers (about thirty members) was established. The party also recruited followers from secondary-school students, the intelligentsia, soldiers, and especially railway workers. Thus the party was well prepared to meet the storms that came in the fall and winter of 1905. In the Kiev unrest of this time, the PSR played a significant role. K.A. Sukhovych became the main SR opponent to the leader of the Social Democrats, A.G. Shlikhter. In addition, I. Prilezhaev and M.B. Ratner, who later became well known agitators, played important roles.[48] According to information provided to a city conference held in October 1906, the efforts of the Kiev committee resulted in the formation of 27 "circles" (*kruzhki*) with a total of 450 organized workers.[49]

Less is known about the SR organization in Ekaterinoslav, the second committee established primarily to conduct agitation among workers. Here the RPPOR had strong support; from the fall of 1905, great numbers of workers are known to have streamed into the PSR. The party enjoyed great popularity in the metalworking factories as well railroad depots. The railway workers made up the mass of those who, under the leadership of the SR teacher P.S. Diinega, fought bitter street battles with government troops in December. Their resistance came closest to that offered in Moscow.[50]

In all the cities in Ukraine, the PSR faced much stronger competition from Social Democracy then in the Volga region.[51] It is not clear how well the SRs were able to meet this challenge. In any event, the RSDRP was so solidly entrenched in Kiev's working class that its leader Shlikhter could, "almost without pause," make good his claim to chair the strike assemblies in the fall of 1905.[52]

Agitation among the Peasants

Without doubt, agitation of the Ukrainian SRs was much more fruitful in the village than in the city. Still, these successes in no way corresponded to the expectations of the party leadership. Measured in terms of the formation of regular SR peasant brotherhoods and committees, the progress of Ukrainian committees – despite the

[47] Shklovskii, Nakanune 1905 g., p. 124. For an overview of this period see: Flyers in PSR Archive 623.

[48] Shklovskii, Nakanune 1905 g., p. 128f., a list of the "komitetchiki", p. 129.

[49] Protokol Kiev, 18 October [1906?], PSR Archive 489; Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482.

[50] See Letter about the committee of Ekaterinoslav from 14 April [probably 1907], PSR Archive 758/9; Ekaterinoslav, 5 October 1905, PSR Archive 553/I; A. Tonin, P.S. Diinega i 'gorlovskii boi', manuscript, PSR Archive 195.

[51] So an instructive report on the gouvernements Kiev, Chernigov and Bessarabia; Polozhenie del v iugozapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482.

[52] Shklovskii, Nakanune 1905 g., p. 129.

favorable conditions – lagged far behind that of the Volga region. It hardly comes as a surprise that, in the unimportant province of Kamenets-Podol'sk, practically "no organized work" was being done.[53] What is astounding, however, are the similarly negative reports that came from rather less marginal regions, which did have solid socialist revolutionary groups with strong traditions. Even the local peasant agitators in Ekaterinoslav admitted that the PSR's activities in their province, as late as the summer of 1906, were "poor."[54] In 1907 a Central Committee inspector found the condition of the SR organization in Khar'kov to be "very weak." Because the city committee lacked insufficient personnel, the best propaganda efforts of local cadres could reach hardly one third of the volosti.[55] And although the party had "regularly" conducted agitation in Kiev province since May 1906[56] and did reach two thirds of all uezdy, the party's success here was at best moderate.[57]

The SRs of Chernigov were much more successful. They knew how to use the "extraordinarily revolutionary" mood of the peasants and established "serious" and solid brotherhoods or volost committees in eleven of the fifteen uezdy. Thus it comes as no surprise that the SRs in Chernigov spent 25 to 30 percent of their budget for travel to the countryside. They were also apparently in a position to conduct continuous agitation.[58] The work of SRs in Kursk was also good, eliciting praise in the 1907 report by the Central Committee representative.[59]

It was only the Voronezh committee that received unstinting, almost excessive, praise. With 65 activists, it had a staff of revolutionaries to work effectively not only in the city but also and, above all, in the countryside. A provincial committee composed of two members each from the intelligentsia, workers, and peasants as well as eight traveling agents was established. With the help of an additional 75 agitators, by November 1906 this committee could bring approximately 6,000 peasants into contact with the party. Moreover, it was even able to establish a functioning pyramid of party cells in the countryside. Voronezh province was "in its organizational effec-

[53] Kursk 25 July [1906?], PSR Archive 482.

[54] Ekaterinoslavskaia guberniia, report to the All-Russian Conference of the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators, September 1906, PSR Archive 122.

[55] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainskoi oblasti, PSR Archive 482; Khar'kovskaia guberniia (k kontsu 1906 g.), tables, PSR Archive 623; Khar'kovskaia guberniia, Report to the All-Russian Conference of the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators, PSR Archive 122; Rapport 1907, p. 155.

[56] Kievskaia guberniia, Report to the All-Russian Conference of the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators, September 1906, PSR Archive 122.

[57] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainskoi oblasti, PSR Archive 482; Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482.

[58] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482; Ukraintsev, 7 July [1906?], PSR Archive 482; Vozniknovenie i rabota Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482; Rapport 1907, p. 155ff.

[59] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482; Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482.

tiveness an outstanding presence in the Ukraine ... and in all of Russia"[60] and hence had a position similar to that of Saratov province in the Volga oblast. But the party leadership had its doubts about the performance of the Voronezh comrades, since the latter used their influence on the peasants in ways not always in accord with the desires of the Central Committee. Beginning in the fall of 1906, serious conflicts arose. One major cause of conflict was the question of revolt. Contrary to the party line, the Voronezh SRs regarded isolated and regionally limited uprisings as a necessity. Not only did they try to convince their colleagues in neighboring provinces to follow their lead, but they even tried independent action, with disastrous results.[61]

A judgment on the Ukrainian PSR's peasant agitation must conclude that the results were generally negative. Aside from Voronezh, the SRs were unable to exploit their advantages. The Central Committees representative summarized his impression on conditions in Ukraine by stating that "the revolutionary mood among the peasants" was increasing and that, with only little effort, true "wonders of organization" could be accomplished. As a rule, however, not much was actually accomplished.[62] The situation in the southern Ukraine, where conditions for the party were much more difficult, was even less satisfactory. Another emissary from the party leadership gave this description of conditions in the region: "The party organization is weak ... [There is a] deficiency of means and resources ... The influence of the party is not great; the work is isolated; the policy is wait-and-see. Activists seldom appear. Organized participation in the revolt is not to be expected ... A wave of spontaneous movements can pull the peasantry along; they will participate in the Duma elections. They do not reject recruits and taxes."[63]

7.1.3. The Central Industrial Region

The Central Oblast covered the provinces of Moscow, Tver', Iaroslavl', Kostroma, Vladimir, Riazan', Tula, Kaluga, Orel, and Nizhnii-Novgorod, and included the SR organizations in provincial capitals and the towns of Murom and Elets.[64] This oblast

[60] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482, p. 5; further: Vozniknovenie i rabota v Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482; Voronezhskii komitet, Report to the All-Russian Conference of the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Agitators, September 1906, PSR Archive 122; Response to an OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 487; Rapport 1907, p. 150f; Istoriia odnogo bratstva, in: Bor'ba i zhizn' No. 4 (20 February 1908). Izd. Voronezhskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 487, p. 4.

[61] See above Chapter 5, note 71.

[62] Doklad o sostoianii Ukrainsk. obl., PSR Archive 482. The report of the Ukrainian delegate to the third party council meeting from July 1907 was very pessimistic. PSR Archive 679. See further a letter on socialist revolutionary work in the gouvernements Khar'kov, Voronezh, Kiev and Kursk from 25 October [1906?], PSR Archive 758/759.

[63] Polozhenie del v iugo-zapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482, p. 20.

[64] Protokoly 1906, p. 302f. For Moscow see below, p. 234ff.

organization encompassed approximately Russia's central industrial region. The economic and social structure of this region was very different from that of the core regions of SR support. In the provinces of Tver', Iaroslavl', and Kostroma, the PSR faced a relatively well-developed proletariat (primarily in the textile industry). In the other provinces, it had to work with a peasantry that, compared to other regions in Russia, suffered somewhat less from land shortage and population pressures. Indeed, not only did the peasantry in this region hold an unusually high percentage of the land, but also could improve its income by plying handicrafts at home and seasonal work in the neighboring industrial centers.[65] The majority of the village population in the Central Oblast belonged to the *obshchina*. But here, in contrast to the black-earth zone of Ukraine and the Volga, this region had neither a characteristic tradition of agrarian revolution nor an extremely acute, continuous conflict between peasants and noble landowners to keep such a tradition alive. Part of the reason for this was the transformation of the socage into money payments (*obrok*) relatively early in the reform process.[66]

The Work in Cities

Measured in terms of PSRs' own objectives and the success of Social Democrats, the resonance of SR agitation in the cities of the central industrial region generally appear to have been rather modest. Complaints about acute deficiencies of competent revolutionaries, money, and literature (to be sure, such complaints by local committees were commonplace) as well as negative conclusions about the weak contacts to the factories and to "Society" were especially frequent. Reports expressing satisfaction with the work accomplished were extremely rare. Thus, SRs in Vladimir could not have achieved much since "the population was simply not aware of their activities."[67] In Kostroma, as late as the end of 1906, the party had been able to establish SR circles in only four factories. The Oblast Committee received absolutely no information from Iaroslavl' and Riazan', while in Kaluga the party had conducted agitation in just two factories "because in all the others there were already well established Social-Democratic organizations." At best, the party in Kaluga was able to mobilize a few *intelligenty*, primarily seminarians and secondary-school students. The local party committee judged its own activity self critically: "The effect on society is weak because the organization is composed of secondary-school students

[65] See V.Z. Drobizhev, I.D. Koval'chenko, A.V. Murav'ev: Istoricheskaia geografiia SSSR (Moscow, 1973), p.223ff.; Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, Map 2.

[66] See Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, p. 31.

[67] Polozhenie vo Vladimirskoi gubernii, PSR Archive 553/I. See also: Vladimirskii gubernskii Komitet, PSR Archive 127; A.N. Asatkina (ed.), O rabochem dvizhenii i sotsial-demokraticheskoi rabote vo Vladimirskoi gubernii v 1900-kh godakh. Vyp.I. Po arkhivnym materialam i lichnym vospominaniiam. (Vladimir, 1926), p. 148. Important for socialist revolutionary work in the central oblast: Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676; Rapport 1907, p. 53ff.

and has no personalities who are popular in society."[68] No doubt, the extent of this dilemma was rooted in the specific problems facing SR agitation in Kaluga. Still, the essence of this critique was applicable to PSR organizations in all of Russia, for all too often the party was able only to motivate students to become actively engaged in the SR cause.

The difficulties facing the PSR in the central industrial region, how it organized its work, and its daily petty battles against the Social-Democratic rivals – all that is illustrated in remarkable detail in a report on the fate of the committee in Shuia, a medium-sized town in Vladimir province. Due to the volume and accessibility of information contained in this report, it is worth examining in some detail. With some ten factories and approximately 12,000 workers, Shuia was a center of the textile industry. The living conditions of its workers were above average, with a nine-hour workday and a daily wage of 15 to 30 rubles. Located some twenty kilometers from the major industrial city of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, this city was an important center of the revolutionary movement and had spread political and social unrest to the neighboring towns. Shuia itself had had a few Social Democratic circles from as early as 1900, but they had only ten to fifteen members and fared poorly. In May 1905, the first "great spontaneous" strike erupted in Ivanovo-Voznesensk; it lasted 72 days and involved up to 40,000 workers. The spark quickly reached Shuia, where 12,000 workers revolted. However, whereas in Ivanovo-Voznesensk the "entire city stood in flames," after just a few days everything was "peaceful and still" in Shuia.

Both revolutionary parties in Shuia began large-scale efforts to build up their organizations in the fall of 1905. The Social Democrats founded factory committees and organized a central regional group. This group, directed by the experienced worker Arsenii, consisted of people who, to use the words of the SR reporter, "had worked out their *Weltanschauung* in two or three years and had prepared themselves for disciplined activity." By contrast, the PSR was new to the local revolutionary scene and did not have the proven resources at the grassroots level. Its first workers' circle, founded by two imported *intelligenty* (secondary-school students from Saratov), had correspondingly limited success. Only in January 1906 did events took a turn for the better, when the university student Bernikov came from Moscow to assume leadership of the organization. This talented agitator quickly aroused the urban intelligentsia to support the SR cause. He was even able to induce "many workers" to change sides by demonstrating his rhetorical and argumentative superiority over his SD rival (Arsenii) in the beloved political debates in front of the factory gates. Mass

[68] See Response of the Kostromskoi komitet P.S.-R. to an OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 553/I; Kratkii otchet o deiatel'nosti Kostromskoi gruppy. October 1906, PSR Archive 489. Iaroslavskaia gruppa [end of 1906], PSR Archive 127. Kaluzhskii Komitet, Response to an OB survey from February 1907, citation there as well as other documents there and in PSR Archive 328.

assemblies were sure methods to victory for the PSR, and neo-populist agitation for the first time showed a broader impact. The local party was able to establish a central committee with seven members, to increase the number of "circles" (*kruzhki*), and to adopt a program so as to systematize work in these circles.

Unfortunately for the PSR, however, Bernikov's undisputed achievements were more than offset by serious failures:

"a)no solid organization was founded; an organization that should have been based not only on the activity of workers but also on centralization; (b) a Maximalist group was formed and split the organization; (c) the impression was created that the organization could survive without centralization. Instead, the organization actually lived solely from the magic of one single person."

Indeed, complained the report, "anarchistic habits " had found their way into the organization.

These deficiencies did not immediately become apparently, at least partly because the Social Democrats – rent by factional fighting between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks[69] – steadily lost ground. A short time later, in mid-1906, similar conflicts split the SRs in Shuia as well. After Bernikov joined the Maximalists (for whom he had showed sympathy from the very beginning) and left the city, just how meager his achievements really were finally became clear: "A library for propagandists, another for workers, a few revolvers, and contacts with two or three villages, five to seven factories, and a few sympathetic students. No one showed up to the assemblies and there was no regular systematic organization." Even the supply of literature was irregular, for it was all organized by Bernikov's ties to the Moscow committee. A new agitator from Ivanovo-Voznesensk led the SRs in Shuia to a new period of short-lived success, but the damage could not be undone: the working class was permanently lost to the PSR. In those areas where the Okhrana could not fully prevent revolutionary agitation, the position of SDs was unassailable. The summary by the SR reporter cited two factors as the root causes of the party's unhappy condition in Shuia: (1) the Marxists of Shuia were able to combine "the political independence of grassroots organizations with the principle of strict centralization and party discipline"; (2) they were the first to found trade unions and exploit the opportunity of legal economic work. Although it would be inappropriate to generalize solely from the example of Shuia, the critique in this report unquestionably did point to a serious weakness in party work in the central industrial region and in all of Russia – namely, a proclivity toward haphazard activity and a deficiency in stable organization. There is indeed

[69] According to the socialist revolutionary reporter the Men'sheviki were supported by the agitators and the Bol'sheviki by the workers. This conclusion is confirmed by D. Lane, The Roots of Russian Communism. A Social and Historical Study of Russian Social Democracy 1898–1907 (Assen, 1969), p. 212 and passim.

much to suggest that the almost reverential envy with which the reporter regarded the tight leadership and solidarity of the Social-Democratic group was justified not in Shuia.[70]

In other cities of the Central Oblast, conditions for party work were more favorable. As early as late 1902, the SRs in Tula had established circles in the secondary schools and a year later were able to make contact with the party leadership in Geneva. Their work was judged to be very successful. Arrests in the fall of 1903, however, brought a long pause in the activities of the Tula SRs. This involuntary interruption did not end until April 1905, when three professional agitators arrived and renewed the party activities, raising them to a high level of effectiveness. They founded school circles and three uezd committees and even elected a provincial committee. In mid-1906, at the apogee the revolution, the SR organization in Tula had about 330 members, comprised of 30 *intelligenty*, 40 secondary-school pupils, with the remainder being workers. The uezd groups had about 170 members, including 30 teachers. During periods of the most intense work, about fifteen to twenty circles were active and had between 150 and 200 workers. The party was able to secure some influence over the shoemakers' and printers' unions and, for a short time, was even able to conduct "energetic" agitation in the local garrison.[71] Still, the Tula SRs were apparently not satisfied with their performance and in October 1905 themselves judged their activities to be "very weak." At no time could the deficiency of qualified personnel and money be alleviated and, from an early point, the conflict between Maximalists and majority SRs crippled the party's efforts. Finally, in October 1906 a large-scale Okhrana offensive led to the arrest of all *komitetchiki* as well as all the SRs in the local soviets, thereby utterly devastating the local organization. Not until July 1907 were traveling agitators able to renew briefly the organization in Tula. That fall it even proved possible to convene a general conference of the entire city – a remarkable achievement. Nevertheless, the overall sad picture was "sad" and not at all improved. The Tula delegate to a Central Oblast conference (September 1907) offered the following general assessment of activities by local committees during the last few years: "The ground was fruitful, but the number of activists was limited."[72]

Tver', with 30,000 to 32,000 workers, was another important center of the textile industry and here too provided good conditions for the PSR to operate.[73] Despite

[70] Kratkii ocherk razvitiia s.r. organizatsii v g. Shue Vlad. gub., PSR Archive 563.

[71] Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi Oblasti, PSR Archive 676; Doklad na oblastnoi s"ezd 14 sent. 1907, PSR Archive 326; Tul'skaia organizatsiia, otchet 1906–1908, PSR Archive 127, as well as further documents in PSR Archive 127.

[72] All citations from: Doklad na oblastnoi s"ezd, PSR Archive 326. The delegate from the central oblast came to the same judgment in his report to the third party council in July 1907, PSR Archive 679.

[73] Tverskoi Komitet PSR, Fall 1907, PSR Archive 428; Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676.

the deep roots that the Social Democrats had in this city, the PSR was able to begin work here in 1902. At first the party was "not well known among the mass of workers," but by early 1905 had become so effective that its Marxist rivals had to take the competition seriously. This new-found respect frequently made common action, especially between October and December 1905. The next year the party succeeded in establishing a base in a few unions, organizing approximately 150 to 200 workers and 40 *intelligenty*,[74] electing a provincial committee, and – in collaboration with the RSDRP (which soon withdrew, however, from the joint enterprise) – setting up a branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Union. Nevertheless, the SRs in Tver' also suffered their share of defeats. In December 1905, after the assassination of a high-level civil official, the committee practically had to dissolve itself because of the intensive police investigation. This incident demonstrated yet again the self-destructive effect of political terror. More serious was the limited contact with the working class. Since the arrest of a single man in a factory could disrupt party work for months, the active party members among the working class were obviously not very numerous. The SRs in Tver' rationalized this situation by claiming that the "great distances between factories" preventing the workers from attending regularly its educational circles. It thus happened that a Social Democratic worker would, in the name of many others, declare that he recognizes and accepts the "program and tactics of the Socialist Revolutionaries," yet simultaneously explain that he would "not convert" to the PSR because the party had "no organization" in his factory.[75]

SR agitation among the working class in the central industrial region was most successful in Nizhnii-Novgorod. Established by the old narodnik Panov in 1902, the neo-populist group in this important trading city on the Volga grew rapidly and was soon the second-largest PSR organization in the Central Oblast (after Moscow).[76] From the very beginning, it concentrated its propaganda on the industrial suburb Sormovo because, according to a report of the local SR paper, the party was well received not only by the proletariat but also neighboring peasants. In the summer of 1906, it proudly reported to the Organization Bureau that it had won over approximately 280 workers for the revolution. The local party believed that agrarian socialist ideas were so popular here because at least 60 percent of those exploited in the factories still maintained close contacts with their village homes. In fact, the local party believed that in Sormovo it had found especially large numbers of that supposedly ideal target for SR views, namely – the "worker-peasant." Although the social structure in Sormovo favored the PSR, it did not prevent the SDs from gaining

[74] Tverskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 127.

[75] Tverskoi Komitet, PSR Archive 428.

[76] Nizhegorodskaia guberniia, February 1907, PSR Archive 320; Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676.

numerical superiority. According to data presented by the SR paper here, not only did Social Democracy control twice as many workers (550) but its candidates could also win almost three times as many votes as the SRs in the election to the workers' electoral body during elections to the second Duma.[77]

Agitation among the Peasantry

At a conference of PSR peasant agitators in September 1906, the delegate from the Central Oblast characterized the condition of SR peasant agitation in the central industrial area as being "extremely variable." The party's success was poor especially in the provinces of Kostroma, Kaluga, Tula, Iaroslavl',[78] and Riazan' – despite the fact that conditions here were favorable, given the purely agrarian structure and the relative shortage of land.[79] In Vladimir, the PSR did not succeed in establishing loose contact with the peasantry until the spring of 1906.[80] Apparently, the situation was better in Tver' province, where the party could boast of "productive work"[81] and organizations that were "solid" and partially initiated by the peasants.[82]

It seems, however, that such boasting reflected only a partial and temporary vision of the truth. In November 1906, a Central Committee inspector reported just the opposite, indeed, that almost everywhere there were only "seeds of an organization," that at best there were merely "contacts and acquaintances," and that everywhere he saw serious deficiencies. Despite some promising beginning, the SR intelligentsia in Tver' was still completely isolated from the countryside.[83]

The situation in Nizhnii-Novgorod province was different because, particularly with regard to agitation among the peasantry, SR work here was deemed quantitatively and qualitatively the "best organized in the entire Central Oblast."[84] More than twenty traveling agents worked here, an unusually large number, and "no less than 80 organizations" existed in the villages. At the beginning of 1907, activists here claimed that 206 volosti with about 1,500 members were organized.[85]

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[77] Sormovskaia organizatsiia rabochikh PSR, PSR Archive 320. Also: Nizhegorodskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 127, and further documents in PSR Archive 320.

[78] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, predstavlennye na s"ezde rabotnikov v sentiabre 1906 g., PSR Archive 122. Further: Kostroma, Response to an OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 553/I; Iaroslavskaia gruppa P.S.-R., PSR Archive 127 and further documents in PSR Archive 489 and 127.

[79] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve ..., PSR Archive 122.

[80] Asatkina, O rabochem dvizhenii i sotsial-demokraticheskoi rabote, p. 148; Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve ..., PSR Archive 122.

[81] Tverskoi gubernskii s"ezd, 25 April 1907, PSR Archive 428.

[82] Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676; similar: Rapport 1907, p. 73; Tverskoi Komitet, in: ZT No. 2 (12 July 1907), pp. 21–22.

[83] Poezdka po gubernii, 25 October-2 November 1906, PSR Archive 127.

[84] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve ..., PSR Archive 122.

[85] Nizhegorodskaia guberniia, Response to an OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 320; Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi Oblasti, PSR Archive 676. See also: Izvestiia Nizhegorodskogo Gubem-

Only the work of the PSR in Orel province was judged to be positive. Under the direction of a provincial committee, a large number of agitators were active. However, a table intended to reveal the scale of propaganda success among the peasantry simultaneously revealed its weaknesses. Thus, although it listed 130 SR bases and 45 brotherhoods (with about 50 to 85 members), only eight groups had paid membership dues, just twelve assemblies were held, and a mere ten to twenty flyers had been distributed. It cited fourteen active party comrades -- clear proof that the great majority of those allegedly "organized" were in fact merely sympathizers. In addition, the data showed that SRS had conducted intensive agitation in only two uezdy, and it certainly was no accident that these were the closest to the provincial center.[86] The urban *komitetchiki* had only occasional contact with the other uezdy. As a result, even in an area like Orel province, where SR cells were relatively widely distributed, "comrades coming from province did not know that five days earlier a member of the Oblast Committee had just visited them."[87]

7.1.4. Belorussia

The PSR's very first regional organization was that of the "Northwest," created in April 1904 and including the committees of Belostok, Vil'na, Dvinsk, Vitebsk, Smolensk, Briansk, Gomel', and Minsk.[88] Ultimately its borders included the provinces of Smolensk, Minsk, Vil'na, Vitebsk, Mogilev, and Grodno as well as the committees named above and the committee in Mogilev.[89] In accordance with the party statute, an oblast conference in October 1906 decided to create an intermediate level between the oblast and the local committees and to divide the entire oblast into twelve new regions: Smolensk, Briansk, Vitebsk, Gomel', Minsk, Dvinsk, Vil'na, Grodno, Mogilev, Pinsk, as well as the "Polish raion" around Kovno and the county of Novozybkov in Chernigov province.[90] The organizations with the

skogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 3 (7 June 1907) and No. 2 (May 1907), p. 2; Protokol Nizhegorodskogo gubernskogo s"ezda organizatsii P.S.-R., all in: PSR Archive 320; Nizhegorodskaia guberniia PSR Archive 127; Protokol Nizhegorodskogo gubernskogo s"ezda P.S.-R, in: PI No.4 (5 January 1907), pp. 14–15 and numerous other documents in PSR Archive 320.

[86] See a table in PSR Archive 433. Further: Orlovskaia guberniia. Protokol Gubernskogo Delegatskogo s"ezda P.S.-R., 22 July 1906, PSR Archive 122; Orlovskoe gubernskoe Biuro P.S.-R., Severn. Orlovskoi gubernii and other documents in : PSR Archive 433, as well as: Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi Oblasti, PSR Archive 676.

[87] Mtsenskaia gruppa [Orlovskoi gub.], PSR Archive 433.

[88] Ko vsem, Oblastnoi Komitet Severo-Zapadnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., July 1904, PSR Archive 442; RR No. 31 (25 August 1904), p. 23. For the Northwest oblast as a whole: Rapport 1907, p. 120ff.

[89] Protokoly 1906, p. 304.

[90] Protokoly 6-go oblastnogo s"ezda Severo-Zapadnoi oblastnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., 12 October [1906], PSR Archive 426, No. 43.

most members were Vitebsk, followed by Gomel' and then Briansk.[91] The Russian northwest was not a zone of significant SR influence. When the PSR distributed mandates for a party congress to the various oblast organizations (the distribution being proportional to the strength of the membership and the importance of the organization), the northwest ranked fourth – surpassed by the Volga, central industrial region, and Ukraine.[92] Nevertheless, the Northwest Oblast was an extraordinarily capable organization, especially at the highest levels. Not only did it convene six oblast conferences held, but its Oblast Committee also had the first oblast typography and was the only committee to publish an informative and high-quality oblast newspaper.[93]

The socio-economic structure of the Northwest Oblast divided it into two very different regions. One, located in the west, was partially industrialized, with an agrarian structure based on self-standing family farms (*khutor*), which made it more like the socio-economic structure found in east-central Europe. In the east-southeast, the society and economy was almost exclusively agrarian and similar to conditions found in Ukraine.[94] Correspondingly SR agitation in the west concentrated primarily on the urban working class, while in the east and south it focused on the peasantry.

Agitation among Workers

In all of Belorussia, the PSR had to deal not so much with an industrial working class as with a proletariat of artisans who were predominately Jewish. For example, the Workers' Union of the SR committee in Smolensk, the PSR's oldest bastion in this part of Russia, was recruited "primarily" from artisans, specifically bakers and printers.[95] Party propaganda elicited the most favorable reception in Minsk from the tailors, in Mogilev from tanners.[96] The party booked similar successes in Novozybkov, Gomel', Vitebsk, and Pinsk (where the SRs were active exclusively among the preindustrial urban lower classes).[97] And, almost everywhere, the PSR enjoyed

[91] See statistics in the materials of the second party council, PSR Archive 489.

[92] Protokoly [vtorogo] soveta partii, PSR Archive 489.

[93] Izvestiia Sev.-Zap. Oblastnogo Komiteta, then: Oblastnye Izvestiia. Izd. Severo-Zapadnogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No.1–4 (April–July 1907), PSR Archive 442.

[94] See the very informative article: Ob osobennostiakh raboty v Sev.-Zap. krae, in: PI No. 8 (12 April 1907), pp. 12–13.

[95] Otchet Smolenskogo Komiteta k okti. 1906 g., PSR Archive 426, No. 35; Response to an OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 426; Otchet po Smolenskoi gubernskoi organizatsii P.S.-R., 30 June 1907, PSR Archive 623; report on the Second Government Conference from May 1907, PSR Archive 442.

[96] Otvety Minskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., February 1907, PSR Archive 426; Mogilevskaia guberniia, April 1906, PSR Archive 623.

[97] Novozybkov, Response to an OB survey, February 1907, PSR Archive 426; Novozybkov k 15 janv. 1907 g., PSR Archive 426. Gomel', October 1906, PSR Archive 426. Vitebskaia organizatsiia, several reports for the Eighth Oblast Conference of the Northwest oblast, July 1907, PSR Archive 426; Pinsk, 27 January 1907, PSR Archive 483.

very great popularity among the railway workers. According to a Central Committee representative, the impression was widespread in Minsk that "the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Railroad Union were one and the same".[98]

The Neo-Populists found a factory proletariat worthy of the name only in two cities – Briansk and Dvinsk. Briansk apparently became the center of SR agitation among the working class in the northwest oblast. The PSR operated here openly since 1903. The city organization listed an astonishing 1,000 members in 1906; if raion groups are include, the figure rose to 1,400. Nine Workers' Unions with approximately 460 members had been set up; a central Workers' Union had 100 members. All these groups financed themselves with membership dues, something quite exceptional in the PSR.[99] Central Committee representatives gave the SRs in Briansk the highest marks of all organizations in the Northwest Oblast. Among the reasons for the PSR success here was their ability to defeat the Social Democrats, including the Jewish Bund.[100] But by the end of 1907 the optimism had already dissipated. The Briansk raion committee reported that, at this time, "not one worker's circle" remained.[101]

The activity of the committee in Dvinsk, which directed an organization of about 450 members, faced conditions no less favorable than those in Briansk. It was especially emphasized that the workers themselves conducted all the agitation and propaganda and that the entire raion had only one *intelligent*. The Dvinsk committee may not have been able to meet the challenge of the Bunt, but its influence on "society" was almost as great, as all the members of SR groups were "former unionists."[102]

Thus Briansk and Dvinsk were famous exceptions but could not relieve the generally poor picture of SR work in the cities of Belorussia. In April 1907, a Central Committee representative complained that the great majority of the committees were "extremely weak," for at best they had 70 to 250 supporters among the artisan proletariat and numerous secondary-school pupils, and in general were poorly organized.[103]

Agitation among the Peasantry

Just as in the cities, the PSR in the villages of northwestern Russia faced special difficulties. One was the general absence of the *obshchina* in this region and

[98] Minsk, Report of the Representative, PSR Archive 435.

[99] Protokoly Sev.-Zap. oblastnogo s"ezda, February 1907, PSR Archive 483 and further documents in PSR Archive 321 and 426.

[100] Ob osobennostiakh raboty v Sev.-Zap. krae, p. 12.

[101] Protokoly konferentsii predstaviteiei Brianskogo ... rabochikh soiuzov P.S.-R., PSR Archive 426.

[102] Protokoly Severo-Zapadnogo oblastnogo s"ezda, February 1907, PSR Archive 483 (citation here); Protocol of the Dvinskij komitet after June 1907, PSR Archive 632; Dvinskaia organizatsiia, October 1906, PSR Archive 426.

[103] Ob osobennostiakh raboty v Sev.-Zap. krae, p. 13.

the dominance of small landholdings and consolidated small peasant landholdings (*otruby*).[104] When the SRs constantly emphasized that "the opinions of family farmers concerning the land do not at all differ from those of the great Russian *obshchina*,"[105] or even maintained that "the moral instincts ... of the Belorussian peasantry were unpropitious for the durability and development of family farms,[106] these were transparent and willful attempts to make a virtue out of a necessity. In the end, even these voices could not deny that the PSR's views were unattractive to the small peasant landowner, even if the party did try to open itself to precisely this clientele.[107] A program calling for the socialization of land and bound to the collectivist traditions of the Great Russian peasantry did not speak to the needs of the small peasant landowner.

Consequently, the PSR's agitation in the countryside was not very successful. Hardly any committee could report anything positive. For example, the SRs of Smolensk summarized the status of the work in their province with the following words: "One must admit that the party workers have done very little to revolutionize the peasantry and have only organized two or three assemblies."[108] SRs in Smolensk attributed this result above all to the lack of personnel,[109] but others found the root causes of failure to be financial problems[110] and the "extremely low level of consciousness" of the peasantry.[111] Reports from Minsk, Novozybkov, and Gomel' were not quite so depressing.[112] Still, this of course did nothing to improve the overall judgment of SR work in Belorussia. Even in areas like Mogilev, where the ground was "very favorable" by the party's own account, the local committee was hardly able to do more than find "two or three people in every village who could call themselves Socialist Revolutionaries." Two causes for the local party's lack of success were of course the great distances and poor communications. The SRs from Mogilev reported with resignation that "there are organizations that are two hundred kilometers apart and expensive to reach, [and] puts a break on the work".[113]

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[104] See Watters, The Peasant and the Village Commune, p. 147.

[105] Mogilevskaia guberniia, PSR Archive 442.

[106] Zemel'nyi vopros v Belorossii, PSR Archive 483. See also: Ob osobennostiakh raboty v Sev.-Zap. krae, p. 13.

[107] See below p. 329ff.

[108] Doklad o polozhenii raboty v Smolenskoi gubernii. January 1907, PSR Archive 426.

[109] Otchet Smolenskogo Komiteta k okti. 1906 g., PSR Archive 426, No. 35; Report on the Second Gubernia Conference in May 1907, PSR Archive 623 and also 442.

[110] Dvinskaia organizatsiia, October 1906, PSR Archive 426.

[111] Doklad Bobruiskoi gruppy Sev.-Zap. Oblastnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., 12 February 1907, PSR Archive 426.

[112] Response of the Minsk committee to the OB survey of February 1907, PSR Archive 426. Response from Novozybkov, PSR Archive 426, Novozybkov k 15 janv. 1907 g., PSR Archive 426. Doklad Gomel' October 1906, PSR Archive 426.

[113] Mogilevskaia guberniia, April 1906, PSR Archive 623. Similar: Otchet po Smolenskoi gubernskoi

7.1.5. South Russia

The PSR's South Russian regional organization was founded in August 1905. The first party congress assigned it responsibility for the provinces of Kherson, Bessarabia, and Tauride as well as the organizations in Odessa, Nikolaev, Kishinev, and Kherson. The committees in Ialta, Simferopol', and Sevastopol' belonged to the "Tauride Union" and held a special position as a sub-raion.[114] Given the importance of the two great ports of Odessa [115] and Sevastopol', it is not surprising that the SRs in the Southern Oblast concentrated their activity primarily on workers and sailors. As early as 1902, there was a socialist revolutionary group in the important naval base at Sevastopol'. Still, until the 1905 revolution, the SRs' influence was limited to intellectuals and a few sailors, whereas the SDs already had a solid organization by 1904. Even as late as 1905, the SR committee consisted of just two "*intelligenty*." Only after the October Manifesto did the increasing militancy of the masses help the PSR achieve its great breakthrough. Social Democrats, by contrast, lost many supporters because of their peaceful tactics despite the fact, according to their opponents, that they were "the heroes of the day." Looking back the SRs analyzed the situation in this way: "Our battle tactics were the seeds upon which the current organization steadily grew." Unknown among the workers in the first year of the revolution, by early 1906 the PSR represented a significant political force and had the support of a "Workers' Union" with nearly 200 members and 3,000 railroad workers. The PSR demonstrated just how popular it had become in early 1907 during the elections to the second Duma: all eight electors to the workers' electoral body were SRs and, they noted with pleasure, they had soundly beaten the Social Democrats with an "overwhelming majority" of 2000 to 80 votes. Despite this success and despite the fact that the workers were regarded as "revolutionized to a high degree,"[116] the SRs could not be sure of the workers' support. They mistrusted the extraordinarily fast mobilization and momentary enthusiasm. That these doubts were justified became clear by the fall of 1907, when the party discovered that the unions were "almost completely" dominated by the Social Democrats.[117] In other areas of party work, there was nothing but "stoppage and decay."[118]

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organizatsii, 10 November 1907, PSR Archive 426.

[114] Protokoly 1906, p. 304. For an overview of the following see Rapport 1907, p. 161ff.

[115] As far as we can see there is no relevant information regarding the activity of the Odessa committee during the revolution.

[116] Iuzhnaia oblast' [Protocol of an oblast conference from November 1906], PSR Archive 424 (all citations from this source). Also: Sevastopol'skii Komitet, report to the second party council, February 1907, PSR Archive 488.

[117] Iuzhnaia oblast', PSR Archive 424; Protokoly zaniatii konferentsii rabotnikov po professional'nomu dvizheniiu Tavricheskogo soiuza, PSR Archive 596/V.

[118] A.N. Pis'mo upolnomochennogo Ts.K. iuzhnoi oblasti, 14 August [1907?], PSR Archive 424.

The South Russian PSR organized peasant agitation in Bessarabia, Crimea, and some regions of Kherson province. According to the party, the work in these areas was rather successful. Party cells were set up in half of uezdy and 50 to 75 percent of the population was made "conscious."[119] As a whole, however, this work was not a significant factor in the PSR's efforts in South Russia.

7.1.6. The Don Region

The PSR's Don-Azov regional organization was relatively insignificant. It was founded late, in August 1906, and embraced the provinces of Don and Azov as well as parts of Kuban and Ekaterinoslav provinces. Inter alia, groups and committees from Rostov, Taganrog, Novocherkassk and Bakhmut were present at the organization's founding meeting.[120]

Only in two cities could the party point to any significant activity. During the first half of 1906, the Socialist Revolutionaries in Rostov, the largest industrial center in the oblast, succeeded in reaching a broader public. Thanks to "significant amounts of money," they set up a printing press and even published a regional paper. But this offensive was not strong enough to solidify a resilient organization and sink roots in proletarian neighborhoods. After the repression that followed the December events, the SR committee did not regain its previous strength until the end of the revolution. In December the party had mobilized approximately 1,000 workers and soon afterwards established a short-lived "Workers' Union." Despite these successes, the city remained what it was before the PSR arrived on the scene – an unassailable bastion of Social Democracy.[121]

The SR group in Taganrog existed longer. Founded in October 1905, it adopted a statute in March 1906 and changed itself into a committee. This new committee even had sufficient financial means to support a few professional revolutionaries. As in other areas, the PSR here had to face strong competition from Social Democracy. In exceptional cases, however, the party was able to win over the majority of the working class. In April 1907, the city organization counted fifty members – office employees, telegraph workers, secondary-school pupils, and members of the working class.[122]

[119] Iuzhnaia oblast', PSR Archive 424; Tables on a few "uezdy" of the Cherson guberniya, PSR Archive 424.

[120] Protokoly 1906, p. 305; protocols of the founding conference from August 1906, PSR Archive 623; also: Konferentsiia Donskoi oblasti, in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 20–22 and Trud Nos.1–2 (September 1906), p. 22.

[121] Protocols of the founding conference from August 1906, PSR Archive 623.

[122] Protocol of the founding conference from August 1906, PSR Archive 623; Oblastnoi s"ezd Azovsko-Donskoi oblasti, 28–29 June 1907, PSR Archive 623.

7.1.7. North Russia

The Northern Oblast organization straddled the provinces of St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Pskov, Olonets, Vologda, Arkhangel'sk, Livonia, and Estonia.[123] It convened its founding meeting in March 1906, with representatives from the committees in St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Vologda, Arkhangel'sk, and Riga participating. It held three more oblast conferences (in October 1906 and in March and June 1907).[124]

With the exception of the region around St. Petersburg and the capital cities of the Baltic, the Russian north was a purely agrarian country. It is therefore something of a surprise that the PSR had the least success in establishing itself in this region.

Agitation among the Workers

As in Belorussia, the Northern Oblast confronted the PSR in the cities with artisans and "worker-craftsmen"[125] laboring in small workshops. There was no factory proletariat worthy of the name. In addition to the secondary-school pupils and *intelligenty*, it was especially the shoemakers, tailors, bakers, and "metal workers" (i.e. lathe operators) who belonged to the local party in Novgorod; in Arkhangel'sk it was the timbermen; in Vologda it was bookbinders, masons, and typesetters.[126] And, as almost everywhere else in Russia, the party won a dominant influence over the railway workers and employees in Pskov, Riga, and Vologda.[127]

Novgorod had the strongest organization. By the end of 1906, the Socialist Revolutionaries claimed to have organized approximately 120 artisans or one-tenth of the entire working population of the city; its agitation in the garrison also appears to have found a certain resonance.[128] The party was also satisfied with its work in Pskov, where in addition to the craftsmen an especially large number of secondary-school pupils filled its ranks.[129] In Vologda, there were complaints about the great lead of the Social Democrats. As the populist veterans who lived here awaited the end of their banishment, they were able to do something to enlighten local population. They generally changed the sporadic work to systematic agitation and soon could achieve some successes. According to its own data, the local committee was

[123] Protokoly 1906, p. 302.

[124] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia i deiatel'nosti Severnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta, PSR Archive 553/I; Rapport 1907, p. 103ff. For St. Petersburg see below p. 239ff.

[125] Iuzhnyi raion Novgorodsk. gubernii, Response to an OB Survey, PSR Archive 208.

[126] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia ..., PSR Archive 553/I; Report to the second party council from Vologda, PSR Archive 208; otchet po Severnoi Oblasti P.S.-R., January 1907, PSR Archive 208.

[127] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia ..., PSR Archive 553/I.

[128] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia ..., PSR Archive 553/I; Rapport 1907, p. 1906. Also: Otchet po Severnoi oblasti P.S.-R., January 1907, PSR Archive 208; Protokol gubernskogo soveshchaniia uezdnykh organizatsii Novgorodskoi gubernii P.S.-R. (October 1906), PSR Archive 208.

[129] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia ..., PSR Archive 553/I; Iz protokola Pskovskogo gubernskogo s"ezda P.S.-R., 1907, PSR Archive 430.

able to win over 800 workers.[130] And a large number of organized workers were reported in Arkhangel'sk even though, as a rule, the oblast committee heard little positive from this city.[131] Riga and the whole of the Baltics remained for the PSR a small splinter party, of no significance when compared with Rosa Luxemburg's Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party.[132]

Agitation among the Peasantry

In accordance with the socio-economic conditions of the region and their political beliefs, all the SR organizations in the North Oblast assigned the highest priority to "awakening" the peasantry. Unfortunately, the meager results of the party's efforts did not at all correspond with its hopes. Aside from a few exceptions, agitation among the peasantry was probably was even less successful here than in the relatively fruitless work in the cities. This was true not only for the provinces of Arkhangel'sk and Olonets in the far north, where the brotherhoods could be counted on the fingers of one hand, but also in the provinces of Vologda, Novgorod, and Pskov. Despite the greatest of efforts (the best example being Novgorod), the PSR could not do more than distribute literature in the uezdy close to the cities. In the other regions, the party had to be satisfied with "a few contacts."[133] The existence of a special peasant committee for the entire Northern Oblast in the St. Petersburg committee could not help matters much. Nor was a surfeit of qualified revolutionaries in the capital of much assistance since, according to a common complaint, they concentrated exclusively on urban tasks.[134]

The failure of SR agitation in the north was so great that the delegate from the Northern Oblast to the All-Russian Conference of "Peasant Workers" (September 1906) felt compelled to present a detailed analysis of the causes for these failures. He did not, as usual, complain about the lack of appropriate personnel and finances, but rather pointed to a number of specific geographic and social characteristics of the region – namely, the "enormous distances, poor communications, insignificance of settlements (small villages), lack of education in the population," and the "absence of a significant lack shortage." Another problem was the absence of a rural intelli-

[130] Vologda, Report to the second party council, PSR Archive 208; Otchet Vologodskogo delegata ob oblastnom s"ezde, October 1906, PSR Archive 208.

[131] Istoriia proiskhozhdeniia ..., PSR Archive 553/I; Otchet po Severnoi oblasti P.S.-R., PSR Archive 208 as well as a table showing the number of those organized in the north oblast, PSR Archive 489.

[132] Letter on the history of the PSR in Riga, PSR Archive 45. For Social Democracy in Lithuania see G.W. Strobel, Die Partei Rosa Luxemburgs, Lenin und die SPD. Der polnische 'europäische' Internationalismus in der russischen Sozialdemokratie. (Wiesbaden, 1974).

[133] Konferentsiia iuzhnogo raiona Novgorodskoi gubernskoi organizatsii P.S.-R., November 1907, PSR Archive 208; Protokol Gubernskogo soveshchaniia uezdnykh organizatsii Novgorodskoi gub. Partii s.-r., October 1906, PSR Archive 208.

[134] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, predstavlennye na s"ezde krest'ianskikh rabotnikov v sentiabre 1906 g., PSR Archive 122.

gentsia, since the few villagers who managed to acquire some kind of education as a rule did not return home. Thus the best mediators of revolutionary opinions were missing and agitation had to be organized by "visiting" zemstvo employees, teachers, doctors, and the like.[135] As was frequently reported from Novgorod province, their eagerness for the revolutionary cause soon cooled. Because the peasantry of the north was an especially "dark mass" and consequently "Tsar and God were deeply embedded in the soul,"[136] the transition from propaganda to organization confronted virtually insoluble problems. It was very easy to set up brotherhoods but, since the party could not "connect them," they all "simply perished."[137]

7.1.8. The Urals

Although the Urals were distant from the centers of Russian society, politics, and economic life, the SRs and SDs were quick to found party organizations in this region. Coal mines and heavy industry were especially fruitful fields for recruiting new activists. However, due to the extremely low level of knowledge of the targets of political propaganda, in the early stages agitation had to limit itself mainly to attempts at a non-party, generalized politicization of the population. Theoretical differences between the two parties were largely ignored and hence nothing stood in the way of cooperation. Thus, toward the end of 1901, the first common organization of Russian Marxists and Neo-Populists was founded – "the Union of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries in the Urals." Its programmatic platform was limited to very general positions. It declared war on the "bourgeoisie structure" and proclaimed the objective of "political domination of the proletariat." It also recognized "strikes, demonstrations, and other kinds of protest" as the means of this struggle. It also confirmed a compromise in the question of terror: it did not elevate assassinations to an official tactic, but permitted individual groups and persons to attack at their own risk. As a whole, the program was unquestionably more strongly influenced by the Social Democrats than the Socialist Revolutionaries, especially since the PSR even accepted the strategy of economic struggle.[138]

The coalition in the Urals lasted two years. It held together much longer than the only other similar attempt at cooperation in Saratov.[139] Common efforts in agitation achieved success especially in Perm' and in the nearby Motovilikhinskii zavod.

[135] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, PSR Archive 122.

[136] Iz zhizni Tikhvinskogo uezda Novg. gub., PSR Archive 483.

[137] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, PSR Archive 122.

[138] Programma Ural'skogo Soiuza Sotsial-demokratov i sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. 1901. PSR Archive 474; Ural'skii letuchii listok No. 1 (1902), PSR Archive 486.

[139] See Golos Truda, Nos. 1–2 (1902). Izd. Saratovskoi ob"edinennoi gruppy sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov i sotsial-demokratov, PSR Archive 521/I and further documents there.

Surprisingly enough, the two parties were continuously able to publish a paper from the very outset of their partnership.[140] The police raided the "Union" in 1903, and afterwards the two parties set out separately to rebuild their organizations.[141]

In February 1906, the PSR established its own regional organization in the Urals to manage the provinces of Ufa, Viatka, and Perm'. Important SR committees existed in each provincial capital as well as the industrial cities of Zlatoust and Motovilikhinskii zavod.[142] The socio-economic structure divided Urals Oblast into two parts: the provinces of Ufa and Viatka were predominantly agrarian, the province of Perm' being one of the most industrialized regions in Tsarist Russia. With respect to membership strength and general political importance, the Urals organization took only a middling position in the PSR.[143] Nevertheless, by taking tactical positions that were often rather unconventional, the Urals delegates frequently achieved an importance at party congresses that belied the real political weight of their organization.

Agitation among Peasants

SR activity among the peasants of Viatka province was deemed very successful. Although *intelligenty* directed this work, the extraordinary initiative and the peasants' will to collaborate were taken as proof of the PSR's success. At a conference of peasant agitators in September 1906, the delegate from Viatka attributed these positive results to the fact that his province had the best zemstvo in all of Russia – hence the educational level of peasants was unusually high and the stratum of intelligentsia in the countryside was extraordinarily broad.[144] Of course, some factors also limited the PSR's effectiveness. Above all, the party faced a situation where the peasants, as former state peasants, had hardly any need for land and also did not suffer under any oppressive due to the noble landowners. The Urals third oblast conference (June 1906) came to the conclusion that "the attitude of opposition" fostered by the work of enlightenment "had by no means developed into a revolutionary attitude".[145] At a provincial conference in Viatka, the SRs noted that all co-workers could not be deemed full party members because they frequently "did not concern themselves with the propagation of our program" but rather simply "tried to awaken a critical

[140] Ural'skii letuchii listok. Nos. 1–7 (1902–03), PSR Archive 474.

[141] *Perm'*, in: RR No. 18 (15 February 1903), p. 15; 1905. Revoliutsionnye sobytiia 1905 g. v g. Ufe i Ural'skikh zavodakh. Ufa 1925, pp. 17–21.

[142] Protokoly 1906, p. 304; Rapport 1907, p. 142ff.; Ocherk deiatel'nosti Ural'skoi oblasti P.S.-R., PSR Archive 486 as well as, unfortunately not very useful, the data in PSR Archive 489.

[143] Protokoly [vtorogo] soveta Partii, PSR Archive 489.

[144] Otchety o rabote v krest'ianstve, predstavlennye na s"ezde krest'ianskikh rabotnikov v sentiabre 1906 g., PSR Archive 122.

[145] Postanovleniia III-go s"ezda Oblastnoi Ural'skoi Organizatsii P.S.-R. (25 June 1906), in: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906 g.), pp. 23–24, here p. 24.

attitude to political life among the peasants".[146] It was no accident that villagers beat up agitators who dared to attack the tsar too harshly.[147]

Agitation among Workers

Perm' was the center of SR activity in the Urals in general and for agitation among workers in particular. The city organization had about thirty to forty members and about 200 to 300 sympathizers. It established contact above all with the electrical works, printing presses, bakeries, and railway workshops. An important exception here was the railway workers' union, where party work was "completely disorganized," and hence this union was not (contrary to elsewhere in Russia) dominated by the PSR but by the Social Democrats. The SRs were successful in this region, as almost everywhere else in Russia, in winning significant support among the urban intelligentsia and students.[148]

The SR committee of Ufa reported intensive agitation in the factories and workshops. It reported not only the existence of many circles and cells (with 300 regular participants), but also succeeded in electing seven SRs to the workers' curia in the elections to the second Duma.[149]

7.1.9. Siberia

The numerous men and women banished here for political reasons actively disseminated populist ideas in this region and therefore created favorable conditions for the establishment of a new populist party in Siberia. As early as 1900, the PSR was able to put down roots east of the Urals. However, its activity before the revolution (that is, in the phase of the change of generations) differed little from that of the 1880s and 1890s. It was only with great effort and after heated controversy between the *stariki* (elders) and the youths that the SRs succeeded in introducing the new methods that would extend their agitation beyond the intelligentsia to reach workers, peasants, and soldiers. In addition, the Social Revolutionaries had to meet the challenge of Social Democrats, who had already consolidated their groups in the most important cities in Siberia.[150]

[146] Viatskoe gubernskoe soveshchanie rabotnikov P.S.-R. Protokol sobraniia 1 July [1907?], PSR Archive 682. Further: Responses of the Viatka committee to an OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 548/I and 682; Ocherk deiatel'nosti Ural'skoi oblasti P.S.-R., PSR Archive 486, and further documents in PSR Archive 480 and 548/I.

[147] Postanovleniia III-go s"ezda Oblastnoi Ural'skoi Organizatsii, p. 24.

[148] Otchet Permskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. s vesnoi 1906 g. do vesnoi 1907 g., PSR Archive 478. Further: Vpered. Izd. Permskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 2 (October 1907); Bor'ba. Izd. Motovilikhinskoi rabochei organizatsii P.S.-R. Nos. 1–4 (1907), both in PSR Archive 478.

[149] Response of the Ufimskii Komitet to the OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 486. Further: Znamia Urala. Organ Ufimskogo gorodskogo i Zlatoustovskogo okruzhnogo komitetov P.S.-R., nos. 3–6 (1908) and numerous other documents in PSR Archive 479. For Zlatoust: Materials in PSR Archive 480.

[150] Ocherk deiatel'nosti s.-r. v Sibiri, PSR archive 201. Very informative: Obzor revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v okruge Irkutskoi sudebnoi palaty za 1897–1907 gg. (SPb. 1908).

In July 1906, the SRs founded their regional organization in Siberia, which consisted of the provinces of Tobol'sk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Enisei, and Transbaikal.[151] Larger committees were found in Irkutsk, Krasnoiarsk, Chita, and Tomsk. As general rule, the PSR had to limit its work in Siberia to the cities to a greater degree than in the rest of Russia, for it was very difficult to reach a peasantry separated by such enormous distances. In addition, it regarded the Siberian peasantry as hardly receptive to revolutionary propaganda. Within the working class, the railroad workers – as probably the largest single contingent – played a significant role. It was therefore no accident when a police report concluded that the expansion of both revolutionary parties followed the Trans-Siberian Railroad.[152] The rest of the PSR's work in Siberia concentrated on the same target groups as in European Russia – above all artisans, owners of small shops, employees and shop assistants, the postal and telegraph employees, and printers as well as secondary-school pupils and *intelligenty*.

Irkutsk had the most important socialist revolutionary committee in Siberia. It was only formally constituted toward the end of 1904 through the consolidation of several agitation circles. At the beginning of 1905, along with the Social Democrats, it was able to mount a "grand strike" of shop assistants and railroad workers together. And as early as July of the same year, it was preparing to set up its own Workers' Union as well as organize the shop employees into a trade union. The union of the railroad employees and railroad telegraph workers was firmly in the hands of the Socialist Revolutionaries. A weakness of the Irkutsk committee was its reliance on one man and, when he was arrested at the beginning of 1906, the committee's work came to a halt. The succeeding "young generation" was not only inexperienced but also let itself be carried away with the "ideas of partisan struggle and expropriation." This new generation included "elements for whom socialism meant nothing," common thieves, and those who profited from the revolution and had found their way in to the ranks of the Socialist Revolutionaries. This made the work of the Okhrana much easier, and it soon arrested the entire Irkutsk committee.[153]

The work of the SRs in Krasnoiarsk was hardly satisfactory. They did not establish a loose and numerically weak group until after the dissolution of the first Duma in the summer of 1906. Only the agitation among peasants appeared to have some success; one police report noted that the PSR had succeeded in convincing the peasants in refusing to pay their taxes.[154] In Chita, the SRs were only able to

[151] Protokoly 1906, p. 305; Rapport 1907, p. 186ff.

[152] Obzor revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia, p. 6.

[153] All citations from: Otchet Irkutskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. O polozhenii dela v dannyi moment [April 1907], PSR Archive 171. See there also: Revoliutsionnoe slovo, Izd. Irkutskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 2 (July 1906). Further: Obzor revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia, p. 55f.; Ocherk deiatel'nosti s.-r. Sibiri, PSR Archive 201.

[154] Otchet o rabote Krasnoiarskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. za 1906 g., PSR Archive 171, also in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), pp. 5–6; Ocherk deiatel'nosti ..., PSR Archive 201. Obzor revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia, p. 44.

begin organized work in June 1906, and their influence in the unions grew "slowly but steadily," especially among the railway workers.[155] Among the students of the university city of Tomsk, the PSR found a promising public for its propaganda. Nevertheless it had to content itself with modest results and largely left this field as well to the Social Democrats.[156]

7.1.10. The Caucasus

From the very beginning, the PSR tried to extend the net of its organizations to the Caucasus, a region relatively untouched by populist propaganda. However, here it had to face very solidly entrenched Social Democratic committees. The latter, which inclined toward Menshevism, posed a more serious hindrance to the PSR's work than anywhere else in Russia. Nevertheless, the party did have some influential helpers, namely the Armenian party of the "Dashnaktsutiun"[157] and the Georgian "Party of the Federated Socialist-Revolutionaries. " According to the Central Committee representative in the Caucasus, these two groups gave periodic financial support[158] and help with personnel, but above all their support took another form: the "Dashnaktsutiun" kept the Armenian proletariat from being completely infiltrated by Social Democracy, while the "Party of the Federated Socialist-Revolutionaries" was attractive to the non-Marxist intelligentsia and distributed agitation literature in Georgian.[159]

With the outbreak of revolution, the SRs had established sufficient organizations in the Caucasus such that in May 1905 they could found a regional organization. This new organization embraced the provinces of Baku, Tiflis, and Kutaisk and included the committees of these cities as well as that of Batumi. Until the end of 1907, the SRs convened three oblast conferences, each of which elected a three-man oblast committee with the authority to co-opt other members.[160] The Caucasian PSR conducted agitation in the city and countryside, but assigned a very low priority to

[155] Chita. Otchet Sibirskomu oblastnomu s"ezdu v aprele 1907 g., PSR Archive 171; Ocherk deiatel'nosti s.r., PSR Archive 201. Also: Sibirskie partiinye izvestiia No. 1 (5 July 1907), pp. 6–7, PSR Archive 756.

[156] Tomskii Komitet, Report to the Oblast conference from April 1907, PSR Archive 171; Ocherk deiatel'nosti s.-r., PSR Archive 201.

[157] See a comprehensive manuscript on the creation and history of this party in PSR Archive 623.

[158] The OK of the Caucasus oblast received in 1906 almost 1/6 of its budgets from the "Dashnaktsutiun." See Otchet o deiatel'nosti Zakavkazskogo Oblastnogo Komiteta P.S.-R. (15 August–15 October 1906), PSR Archive 628.

[159] Zakavkazskaia oblast'. Iz doklada upolnomochennogo Ts.K. o rabote v Zakavkazskoi Oblasti, in: PI No. 9 (5 May 1907), pp. 11–13, here p. 11.

[160] Protokoly 1906, p. 305; RR No. 67 (15 May 1905), pp. 12–13; Rapport 1907, p. 180ff. For an overview see F. Makharadze, Ocherki revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Zakavkaz'e. 1927, p. 317ff., p. 393ff.

its activity among the peasantry. And of the city organizations, only Baku had some significance for the party as a whole. After a short-lived attempt at systematic work in 1903 (which the Okhrana quickly interdicted as it suppressed a protracted strike), it was only with Minor's arrival as Central Committee representative in the fall of 1905 that brought a new beginning. Within a few months, the SR organization had gained such strength that it could exert "serious and great influence on the proletariat in Baku." Once again, however, this phase of success was short-lived. "Internal problems" and above all an irresponsible waste of financial resources brought party work to a halt – as early as the beginning of 1906. A longer period of successful activity began in summer that year "due to a rather significant contribution of money from the Oblast Committee." As a result, the SRs here were able to hire fifteen professional party workers and to publish a local party's own paper, *Molot* ("The Hammer").

According to the report of the Central Committee representative, this upswing shocked the Social Democrats so much that they asked their center for assistance.[161] Of course, the concern of the Social Democrats was not at all justified, for the Socialist Revolutionaries were in no position to break the domination of the RSDRP. By the beginning of 1907, the PSR in Baku did indeed have more than 60 factory cells. According to its own information, however, by the fall of 1907 1,200 to 1,300 Socialist Revolutionaries and 625 members of the Dashnaktsutiun faced approximately 1,800 workers organized by the Social Democrats (comprised of 1,200 Bolsheviks and 600 Mensheviks).[162] The SRs looked with envy upon the "regulated and strict organization" of their Marxist competitors.[163] Despite this strong competition, the PSR was able to assemble not only in Baku but also in the whole of the Caucasus a remarkably large mass of sympathizers. Although by early 1907 it had only 717 registered party members, it could also count a considerable number of sympathizers (18,000). Even this imbalance did not correspond to reality: according to an explanation of the Oblast Committee, one must increase the number of simple supporters "several times" but halve the number of "active members." It seems that many comrades played only "guest roles" so that they could quickly move to the centers of SR work in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Oblast Committee noted "that the process of integrating" the supporters into the organization had "absolutely no plan" and that "the masses were not organized."[164] In short, the Caucasian PSR was unable

[161] Zakavkazskaia oblast', in: PI No. 9, pp. 11–13, citations passim; Molot. Izd. Bakinskoi organizatsii P.S.-R. No. 2 (1907), PSR Archive 553/II.

[162] Baku. September, PSR Archive 553/II.

[163] Zakavkazskaia oblast', in: ZT nd.5 (12 September 1907), pp. 13–14.

[164] Otchet o deiatel'nosti Zakavkazskogo oblastnogo Komiteta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 628. See also a table in Rapport 1907, p. 181. For Baku further: Materialy po 3-mu Zakavkazsk. Oblastn. s"ezdu, 25–30 March 1907, PSR Archive 628; Iz doklada upolnomochennogo Ts.K. o rabote v Zakavkazsk. Oblasti, PSR Archive 628. For the PSR's activity in other Caucasian cities, above all in Tiflis, addi-

to become the strongest force in the revolutionary camp, notwithstanding its significant successes in Baku. The reasons for this failure lie partly in the discrepancy between active core and simple supporters, between local center and the amorphous periphery.

7.1.11. The Northern Caucasus Region

Founded in 1906, the north Caucasus regional organization encompassed Stavropol', Kuban', Terek, and Black Sea provinces. Agriculturally and industrially, these areas were insignificant, hence the PSR's activity in these areas was limited. Not surprisingly, these regional organizations had little weight within the PSR as a whole.[165]

In Stavropol', a city without any large factories, the SRs conducted agitation primarily among the artisans, but was unable to organize them. Although the SRs here did gain influence over the shop employees and the masons' unions, they elicited the core of activists and the majority of members from the ranks of secondary-school pupils. A small group existed in Ekaterinodar since 1904. With about 50 party members in 1906, this group managed to publish its own newspaper and exert a modest influence on the working class. In the Black Sea province, the PSR concentrated its activity on Novorossiisk; in Terek province, it focused on Vladikavkaz. The party was present as a political force in both cities but was unable to organize more widespread activity.

The SRs of the north Caucasus passed critical judgment on their own activities when they concluded that "they were simply unable to gain access to the mass of workers," not to mention their inability to break the monopoly position that the Mensheviks enjoyed in this region. Moreover, since the SRs here limited their agitation in the villages to distributing literature, they had even less chance of posing a serious threat to the Social Democrats.[166]

7.1.12. The Far East Oblast Union of the PSR

The PSR founded its Far East Oblast Union in the final phase of the revolution. As an extension of the Siberian regional organization, it did not cover the entire territory of Tsarist Russia east of the Urals but included, *inter alia*, the SR groups in Vladivostok, Nikol'sk-Ussuriisk, Khabarovsk, and Kharbin. Largely independent of the central party leadership, it had in its local paper *Volia* ("Freedom") an organ that

tional documents in PSR Archive 553/II.

[165] See for an overview: Severo-Kavkazskii Oblastnoi Komitet, PSR Archive 759, and Rapport 1907, p. 171ff. which is based on this source.

[166] Information from: Severo-Kavkazs. OK, PSR Archive 759. See further a few documents scattered in PSR Archive 623 and 553/I.

formed the center of the local organization. The history of the paper was essentially identical with the history of the party.[167]

Volia was set up in April 1906 on the initiative of the exiled narodnik, N. Russel' and published in Nagasaki. The PSR's Central Committee approved the quality and political opinions of this "non-party revolutionary organ." It also approved the plan of some of the paper's editors to integrate the Nagasaki group into the PSR and use it to initiate the consolidation of the neo-populist organizations in eastern Siberia. At the beginning of 1907, the fusion was completed with the resettlement to the continent of the "Foreign Autonomous Committee of the PSR," as the SR émigrés in Japan called themselves since the middle of 1906. The founder of *Volia* protested against this plan. Not only did he want to preserve his political independence, but he also sought to maintain his sole domination of his paper. But the PSR's Central Committee did not recognize his counter-organization.[168]

It is difficult to determine with any certainty the precise activities of the "Far Eastern Union." The party essentially concentrated on Vladivostok, where SR ideas had long found supporters among workers and sailors and indeed the local party counted 2,000 organized members. It was therefore no surprise that the party was able to organize a revolt in the fall of 1907 and to defend successfully their leadership role against the Social Democrats.[169] A contradictory report noted that, in the elections to the second Duma in Vladivostok, three Social Democrats were elected and no Socialist Revolutionaries, but in the entire Far Eastern region as a whole, the PSR had two more electors than the RSDRP.[170]

7.1.13. Turkestan

The regional organization in Turkestan was founded in the summer of 1906 and covered the Central Asian provinces. The only significant group of SRs was active in Tashkent, especially among the railroad workers.[171]

[167] See a list of member groups in PSR Archive 200. Volia. Politicheskaia, obshchestvennaia i literaturnaia gazeta. Izd. Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. 1906–07. Tokio-Nagasaki 1906–1907.

[168] Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti "Voli". Prilozhenie k vtoromu vypusku sbornika statei. Appendix to: Volia No. 98–99 (23 February 1907); Ideinye techeniia i vnutri partii posledstviia ikh; intsident s obrazovaniem novoi gruppy P.S.-R. v Nagasaki, as well as further manuscripts and letters in PSR Archive 200.

[169] Doklad TsK-tu P.S.-R. predstavitelia Oblastn. Kom. Dal'nevostochnogo soiuza P.S.-R., byvshogo Vostochnogo Zagranichnogo Komiteta P.S.-R., Vladivostok, 29 June 1907, PSR Archive 200; Letter to "Boris Dmitrievich" from 25 June 1907, PSR Archive 200, as well as further documents here.

[170] Dal'novostochnaia oblast', predvybornaia kampaniia, PSR Archive 172. For the work of the "Union" as a whole: Otchet Dal'no-Vostochnykh organizatsii, April 1907, PSR Archive 201 as well as further documents in PSR Archive 200 and 171.

[171] Doklad predstavitelia Turkestanskogo O.K. i mestnykh Tashkentskogo i Askhabadskogo Komitetov as well as further documents in PSR archive 623.

7.1.14. Moscow

In 1903, Breshkovskaia – as spokesperson for the Central Committee in Russia – complained that Moscow was an explored area, a "white spot," on the SR map. One year later there was no more cause for complaint. Indeed, by the end of 1904, in the second imperial capital the PSR had an organization deemed the largest and best in all of Russia. No other organization was better prepared for the revolution and no organization played such an important role. Zenzinov's arrival in January 1904 marked the beginning of this extraordinary upswing. He became the leading figure among the Socialist Revolutionaries in Moscow.[172]

Zenzinov was the son of a merchant. A member of the Moscow financial aristocracy. During his studies in Germany (1900–1904), he joined an SR circle of fellow Russian students and became close friends with four members of this circle – Avksent'ev, Fundaminskii, Rudnev, and A.R. Gots.[173] Because Fundaminskii and Gots also came from extremely wealthy Moscow families, some of them had known each other since childhood.[174] In addition to their political convictions, what bound them together was a common philosophical *Weltanschauung* of neo-Kantianism, which they all had studied with great enthusiasm under the leading teachers in Halle and Heidelberg. Avksent'ev was the dominant personality in this circle. According to Chernov, Avksent'ev was not only a complete Russian nobleman but also had an extraordinarily speculative spirit. A talented speaker, he wanted "not only to include Lavrov and Mikhailovskii into the SR program but also Kant and [his teacher] Riehl." Fundaminskii, this "advocate of an optimistic Romanticism" and a capricious, unsteady spirit who soon moved from neo-Kantianism to the "Christians of the Third Testament," and then to the "Order of the Russian Intelligentsia," then to the "Young Russians" and other seemingly progressive sect-like movements, was

[172] The history of the Moscow committee (MC) is the best documented. For the following see Rapport 1907, p. 53ff.; Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676; Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 107ff. and passim; Vishniak, Dan' proshlomu, p. 102ff.; Zenzinov, Pamiati V.V. Rudneva, pp. 52–62.

[173] These men were part of the new generation of socialist revolutionary leaders and became Central Committee members after 1907. These were the political figures who played important roles in leading the party between February and October 1917; Avksent'ev was Chairman of the All-Russian Peasant Soviet, A. Gots was leader of the socialist revolutionary faction in the All-Russian Workers and Peasant Soviet, Zenzinov was one of the organizers of the right wing and Rudnev was mayor of Moscow. That they all belonged to the legal-populist "Pochin" Group in 1911–12 and to the party's right wing in 1917 may be explained by their common philosophical origin. It was this common origin that made out of a friendship formed as students a fact of the greatest importance for the PSR's further development. See below p. 273ff. and p. 318ff. and Appendix B on page 375ff.

[174] See Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 65ff.; Chernov, Pered burei, p. 194ff. In addition to those named above, D.O. Gavronskii, "model student" of H. Cohen in Marburg and later philosophy professor in Bern, his sister A.O. Gavronskaia, M.O. Tsetlin, A. Tumarkina and A.D. Vysotskii belonged to this circle. That most of these friends were heirs to fortunas worth millions was probably quite helpful to the PSR in its early years. See below p. 253ff.

close to Avksent'ev in his intellectual powers. If Avksent'ev with his sharp intellect was mockingly called Khomiakov, the extravagantly emotional Fundaminskii seemed to resemble Konstantin Aksakov. Zenzinov combined a correct strictness that was imprinted with the "Muscovite-Siberian piety of an Old-Believer" with a good dose of "sentimentality." Rudnev was a leader with a "rough hand in a silk glove." And Gots was more the practical organizer, although he too had some talent as a theoretician.[175]

The SR exile leadership soon noticed the conspicuous talents of the student-friends from Halle and Heidelberg. The two groups established contact that much easier because of the close personal relationship between A. Gots, the younger brother of M. Gots, and the exile leadership.[176] As early as 1903, the "German Socialist Revolutionaries" were asked to go to Russia and assume the function of a Central Committee. They declined but did say that, upon the completion of their studies, they would be at the service of the party. Zenzinov was the first to make good on this promise. He was ordered to Moscow in January 1904 and given the task of setting up an organization there. Rudnev, his most important assistant, and the others soon followed.

In Moscow Zenzinov found "two or three people who called themselves socialist revolutionary groups and occasionally copied or mimeographed proclamations and flyers in limited numbers (no more than 500 copies) and distributed them to workers, students, and society." In addition, twelve to fifteen active propagandists each led two to three circles with six to twelve participants per circle. Agitation was organized in two steps. In the circles of the first kind, they offered elementary political education; in the advanced form, they discussed the theoretical differences between Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries – above all, the agrarian question and political terror. Workers were the main target but the peasants were not forgotten. Students (who correspondingly made up three-quarters of the activists) conducted this work; the other activists were teachers, doctors' assistants, "two or three girls from upper-bourgeois families," and "a few workers."[177]

Thanks to the new "energetic, aggressive, and courageous"[178] leadership, the Socialist Revolutionaries in Moscow were able to make significant progress. The party reorganized the committee and intensified agitation in the factories. In the Prokhorov

[175] Citations from Chernov, Pered burei, pp. 194–195.

[176] In addition I.I. Fundaminskii was a brother of M.I. Fundaminskii, who also belonged to the wider circle around the founding fathers of the PSR. He was good friends with M. Gots since their common revolutionary work in the "Narodnaia Volia" in Moscow. See Chernov, Pered burei, p. 191f.

[177] Otvety V.M. Zenzinova na voprosy O.H. Radkey, NC No. 232 No. 68 (4), citations from answers 1 and 2.

[178] Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR archive 676.

Works, which employed more than 6,000 workers, the Moscow committee elicited a positive reception. Despite periodic intervention by the Okhrana, the SRs set up a clandestine printing press and, for the first time, the local committee was able to publish and distribute more than 1,000 flyers. By the beginning of 1904, Zenzinov and his friends felt strong enough to organize a larger meeting. They even notified the police prefect for Moscow (D.F. Trepov) and the governor-general (Grand Prince Sergei Aleksandrovich) and warned of pitiless retaliation should the latter use the same violent tactics against the Moscow demonstrators that recently had employed in St. Petersburg. Although the working class stayed away from the demonstration rather, as planned, come into the streets, the demonstration was nonetheless complete success. Numerous *intelligenty* (including secondary-school pupils, university students, doctors, and teachers) guaranteed such an impressive demonstration of SR strength that the police, as feared, felt compelled to attack and arrest many marchers. The PSR in Moscow really increased its prestige when, on 2 January 1905, it attacked Trepov. A few weeks later Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, against whom the Fighting Organization had long planned an assault, fell victim to Kaliaev's bomb and thus fulfilled the SRs' promise of revenge.[179]

This first public appearance laid the foundation for an enormous increase in the work of the Moscow committee after the January unrest. University students offered themselves *en masse* as agitators; educated society donated money and made their apartments available for meetings and assemblies; the number of active members rose to 400 or 500. The flood of new members was so great that the organization had to set up branches and divide the city into raions, each of which had a center with its own agitators and propagandists. Not the least of the Moscow committee's success was the acquisition of new, more effective printing machines. The party was for the first time in a position to publish a local SR paper.[180] After a wave of arrests, in June 1905 the SRs in Moscow began to organize "fighting brotherhoods." In August, they convened a meeting for the first time under the protection of this 50-man revolutionary militia. They also stepped up agitation among the soldiers, intensified contacts with the organizations of the intelligentsia,[181] and secured a decisive influence over the local section of the All-Russian Railroad Union founded in September.[182]

[179] See Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676; Rapport 1907, p. 55f.; Otvety Zenzinova, NC No. 232 No. 68 (4) Question 4. Trepov was only lightly wounded.

[180] Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676; Rapport 1907, p. 56f. Rabochaia gazeta. Izd. Moskovskogo Komiteta P.S.-R. Nos. 1, 3, 4 (December 1904, May 1905, March 1906), PSR Archive 333. Apparently this paper was published irregularly and its quality left much to be desired.

[181] The OK of the central oblast noted with pride that the "All-Russian Conference of Doctors" which was held in April 1905 in Moscow accepted the socialist revolutionary slogan "Land and Freedom." See Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive 676.

[182] Rapport 1907, p. 59.

The revolution in Moscow reached another high point in the fall. After the September strike by the teachers and students (led in part by SRs), the printers – who inclined toward the SRs – started their uprising on 2 October and were joined by the railroad workers on 9 October. Four days later, they stopped all rail traffic to Moscow. On 14 October, according to the PSR, 60,000 workers held an enormous meeting on the campus of Moscow University. SRs and SDs addressed the meeting, and the workers openly proclaimed the struggle against the autocracy. Open conflict was now a very real possibility. The Moscow committee bought weapons and increased the fighting strength of the brotherhoods (commanded by A.A. Iakovlev) by 300 men.[183] At the same time, the strike committee changed into a workers' soviet; it had twenty-one SRs, including Zenzinov and Rudnev. These two also represented their party in the Executive Committee of the soviet.[184]

All these events of national importance gave the actions of the local party leadership special weight and therefore required closer contact to the center than was normally the case. In addition to frequent visits by Central Committee members like Chernov and Azef, contact was insured by personal ties as well: the three Moscow *komitetchiki* Zenzinov, Fundaminskii, and A. Gots were simultaneously members of the Central Committee. The formal subordination of the Moscow organization de facto ceased. Zenzinov, at least, later described the cooperation between the local leadership and Central Committee as "friendly, there was never any kind of conflicts or fights."[185]

At the same time, the SR organization in Moscow underwent a further important change. Because the stream of members continued and soon counted 1,300 to 1,500 workers as "more or less" bound to the party,[186] a new restructuring had become necessary. As a result, the party divided the city into ten to fifteen autonomous raion groups. After a city conference confirmed the raion representatives, the Moscow SRs formed the local committee. Consisting of 20 to 25 members and armed with a further 30 to 35 attached propagandists, this committee was for the first time democratically elected.[187]

The Moscow organization was at full strength, had a large number of competent revolutionaries[188], wielded more than enough money, and had the support of

[183] A donation of 10,000 to 20,000 rubles from Fundaminskii paid for a large portion of these weapons. This money came from the substantial dowry of his wife A. Gavronskaia. See Otvety Zenzinova, NC No. 232 No. 68 (4) Question 10.

[184] Rapport 1907, p. 61.

[185] Otvety Zenzinova, NC No. 232 No. 68 (4) Question 3; also in ZP No. 4121.

[186] Rapport 1907, p. 62.

[187] Otvety Zenzinova, NC No. 232, No. 68 (4) Question 2.

[188] In addition to the former Heidelberg student friends the Moscow committee had in 1905, among others, the following members: L.M. Armand, E.M. Ratner, Kovarskii, Iakovlev, M.V. Vishniak, N.N. Gimmer (Sukhanov) as well as the Maximalists Mazurin and Sokolov. See Otvety Zenzinova,

a broad periphery of sympathizers. Under these conditions, it entered the fray of the December events. Because the course of events are well known, they need only to be briefly recounted here.[189] On 3 December, the Tsar had the entire executive committee of the St. Petersburg soviet arrested. The revolutionary parties responded by calling for a general strike on 7 December. Although little happened in St. Petersburg, in Moscow the Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and Socialist Revolutionaries – in a rare moment of unity – acted forcefully and made the decision for to stage an uprising. On the agreed day, the trains and street cars stood still, pharmacies were closed, and the printing presses and other firms ceased to work. The government sent in troops, who on 8 December surrounded an assembly and arrested a few participants. This occurred again on the following day, only on a much larger scale, as members of SR and SD "Fighting Brotherhoods" were locked in the Fiedler School; this time the authorities arrested 118 people. The confrontation was coming to a head. On 10 December, the first street barricades appeared and open fighting began. The Krasnaia Presnia neighborhood resisted with special bitterness. Here the PSR had an exceptionally well-armed "Fighting Brotherhood" of 400 to 500 men under the leadership of Sokolov.[190] However, after just two days, the superiority of regular troops was apparent and the struggle was decided in favor of the state. Without question, the Moscow revolutionaries had overestimated their strength. This was especially true of the local PSR leadership. They ignored the warning of their own Central Committee and instead rattled the chains the loudest and succumbed to that fetish of social revolutionary politics by calling most vigorously for revolt. One of the central figures in these events, Zenzinov, justified this policy years later as "unavoidable."[191]

The police repression following the December days seriously damaged a Moscow organization already weakened by internal conflict with the Maximalists. Under the direction of a Central Committee representative, first Lebedev and then Sletov, it took the party until the summer of 1906 before it could effectively resume agitation and restore the personnel strength of 1,500 to 3,000 members.[192] But the

NC No. 232 No. 68 (4) Question 1. Armand later became known as an underground fighter in the Volga-oblast'. In 1922 E. Ratner was convicted in the PSR trial and died in prison (see Dvenadtsat' smertnikov). Kovarskii was Chairman of the Moscow City Duma in 1917 and Vishniak was Secretary of the Constituent Assembly. Gimmer became a Men'shevik and achieved fame for his history of the revolution (see N.N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revoliutsii. Vols. 1–7 (Berlin 1922–1923). For Vishniak's activity in both revolutions see his: Dan' proshlomu, p. 91ff. and p. 245ff.

[189] See Engelstein, Moscow 1905; Harcave, First Blood, p. 232ff.; Zenzinov, Perezhitoe, p. 222ff. Details also by: V. Zenzinov, Svet i teni (Iz revoliutsionnykh vospominanii), in: Delo Naroda No. 241 (24 December 1917), ZP No. 4122 f. 6.

[190] Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 213.

[191] Otvety Zenzinova, NC No. 232 No. 68 (4) Question 13.

[192] Rapport 1907, p. 63. The OK's detailed report, Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi oblasti, PSR Archive

party's work never reached the level of quality or scale that it had had in the fall. The Moscow committee had to surrender its leading position among SR local organizations to St. Petersburg, and in 1907 it began to undergo rapid decay. The staff of propagandists shrunk to ten to twelve; the number of organized workers dropped to 1,000.[193] And the Okhrana delivered the *coup de grâce* in the summer of 1907, when it succeeded in arresting all the participants of a Central Oblast conference. Until the outbreak of World War I, the PSR in Moscow never recovered from this terrible attack. The leadership consisted of second-rate cadres, and police spies had a field day. In the fall of 1907, the Central Committee had to act: because of the incompetence and suspicion of provocation, it dissolved the local leadership. It then charged a commission (which included Armand and Vedeniapin) with the task of rebuilding the Moscow organization.[194] But their work was also constantly interrupted by arrests, and illegal work was practically impossible. In the fall of 1909, the Okhrana succeeded in arresting the entire Moscow committee, including its hard core – Potapov and the former narodovolets A.V. Pribylev. The PSR's most important local committee thus met an inglorious end. Adding insult to injury, after the disaster of 1909, the PSR discovered that this final Okhrana assault had been made possible by the police spy, Z.F. Zhuchenko, who had held a key position in the secretariat of the Oblast Committee since the end of 1907.[195]

7.1.15. St. Petersburg

It comes as quite a surprise to discover that, unfortunately, the PSR's activities in St. Petersburg are extremely poorly documented. Even the collection of local reports of activities, which could have served as an alternative source, only refers to orders from the Central Committee.[196] One reason for this lack of documentation may be seen in the control that the Central Committee held over the local committee since the fall of 1905. The names of few known members of the St. Petersburg committee point to this conclusion.[197] Still, the city did have its own organization that was to deal with its own problems. These problems are partially reflected in the articles published in the local party paper *Trud* (Work), published since September 1906.

Azef founded the SR group in the capital in 1902, but only in 1904 was it was able to achieve noticeable success among the working class. It founded a 'Workers'

676, unfortunately ends with the December events.

[193] Manuscript from Moscow dated summer 1907, PSR Archive 333.

[194] Protokoly zasedanii TsK P.S.-R., Meeting from 21 August 1907, PSR Archive 203; Manuscript from Moscow, PSR Archive 333; Pribylev, Zinaida Zhuchenko, p. 39ff.

[195] Pribylev, Zhuchenko, p. 46.

[196] See Rapport 1907, p. 104.

[197] In 1906 Leonovich and Sletov, among others, belonged to the St. Petersburg committee.

Union" that was soon in a position to assume some of the leadership tasks held by the intelligentsia. The Workers' Union was at times even able to act as a competitor to the *intelligenty*.[198] As the revolutionary unrest mounted, membership grew so rapidly that the St. Petersburg committee was also able to establish a differentiated organization that also included active factory cells. The number of activists grew to be so large that the party created executive committees at all levels and guaranteed democratic decision making from bottom-to-top. An indication of the independence and initiative of the lower level party groups was the perception by the party leadership that sub-raions must be created as an intermediate authority between the factory cells and the raions.[199] By the fall of 1906, at least, positive reports predominated at conferences of the central council of the Workers Union. The Nevskii raion boasted of a "strong and powerful" organization with more than 1,000 members; the Petersburg raion also reported solid relationships; the Moscow raion expressed the opinion that SRs are dominant "in almost all the factories." It was only the Vyborg raion that sent somewhat less optimistic reports.[200] The greatest hope for SR influence among the trade unions was the railway workers.[201] In addition to the working class, the local party found great resonance among the students; some twenty-one organizations had approximately 800 students.[202] As late as 1907, SRs in the capital were able to organize an impressive city-wide conference (something their comrades in Moscow were absolutely incapable of doing), which included the participation of 97 delegates and guests of the committee, the railroad workers union, the peasant and military agitators, students, trade unions, 45 elected raion representatives as well as many subsidiary and related PSR organizations. Despite complaints of an increasing lack of propagandists, the reports of the neighborhood committees were mainly positive.[203] Months later, the St. Petersburg organization claimed to have more than 6,000 total members.[204]

The SRs' extraordinary success in St. Petersburg in elections for the workers' curia to the Second Duma confirmed these positive reports. Social Democrats were the big winners in this election and solidified their strong position in the proletariat in St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, the two SD factions judged this result a serious embarrassment, for the PSR did win an unexpectedly high number of votes. Socialist

[198] Sovet St. Peterburgskogo Rabochego Soiuza P.S.-r, in: Trud. Nos. 1–2 (September 1906), PSR Archive 472, pp. 15–18.

[199] See Trud No. 3 (October 1906), pp. 12–13.

[200] Zasedanie Soveta Rabochego Soiuza, in: Trud No. 4 (October 1906), pp. 10–13; also: No. 5 (November 1906), pp. 8–9 and No. 8 (January 1907), pp. 13–14.

[201] See Trud No. 9 (February 1907), pp. 8–10.

[202] Trud No. 9 (February 1907), pp. 14–15.

[203] Obshchegorodskaia konferentsiia Peterburgskoi organizatsii P.S.-R., in: Trud No. 12 (April 1907), pp. 13–14; also No. 17 (October 1907), pp. 12–14.

[204] Letter originating in St. Petersburg to A.A. Argunov, 13 September [1907], PSR Archive 758/9.

Revolutionaries even won in factories that were held to be the most progressive and avant-garde of the Marxist revolution.[205] It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this advantageous electoral outcome equated with organizational strength. The PSR in St. Petersburg also suffered from having "many" fellow travelers and "too few" activists.[206] Still, it was able to count upon a mass basis that enabled it to be active on a significant scale under the most difficult conditions after 1907. This ability set the St. Petersburg organization apart from almost all other SR organizations.

7.2. Organizational Problems and Internal Conflicts

The numerous deficiencies and failures of the local SR committees all point to deeper organizational difficulties. The admittedly fragmentary sources clearly shows that these substantial difficulties did indeed tend to cripple the work of the local committees.

Inner-party democracy

All PSR local organizations supported the decisions of the first party congress that had advocated the introduction of democratic principles. It appears that the SRs in the North Caucasus pursued these principles most vigorously. An oblast conference even voted "as a matter of principle categorically against the possibility of co-optation" and allowed a limited application of this procedure only in exceptional cases.[207] The Socialist Revolutionaries in neighboring Taganrog (Don oblast) were also very strict. This region reported an unusual case where a committee was removed because it had wasted party money, that is, neglected its official duties.[208] In the Northwest Oblast, the leadership of party organizations was, as a rule, democratically elected because of massive pressure from the party grassroots.[209] Finally, the SRs in St. Petersburg apparently institutionalized an exemplary control of the leadership by the grassroots, at least since 1906.[210]

Elsewhere in Russia, it was especially the vigilant Okhrana that ensured the continuing practice of the accepted but less desirable method of co-optation. For exam-

[205] A. Mikhailov, Vybory vo vtoruiu Dumu v Peterburgskoi rabochei kurii, in: Otzvuki. August 1907. SPb., pp. 41–53. See also below, p. 282ff.

[206] Trud No. 11 (March 1907), p. 14.

[207] Severo-Kavkazskii Oblastnoi Komitet. Iz materialov k vtoromu s"ezdu, PSR Archive 759; Rezoliutsii 4-go Oblastn. s"ezda Sev. – Kavkazskogo Soiuza P.S.-R, in: PI NO. 9 (5 May 1907), pp. 14–15.

[208] Protocol of an oblast conference from August 1906, PSR Archive 623; Oblastnoi s"ezd Azovsko-Donskoi oblasti, 28–29 April 1907, PSR Archive 623.

[209] See the reports from Minsk, Smolensk, Dvinsk and Kovno; the responses from Minsk and Kovno to the OB survey, PSR Archive 426 and 623; Report on the second gubernia conference from Smolensk, PSR Archive 623 and Dvinskaia organizatsiia, October 1906, PSR Archive 426.

[210] See among others: Trud Nos. 1–2 (September 1902), pp. 15–18, PSR Archive 472.

ple, in Nizhnii-Novgorod half of all SR groups were compelled to abandon elections. A provincial conference even felt forced to set up an alternative committee to exercise the function of a legitimate provincial assembly in the event that the regular assembly could not be convened.[211] In the Urals one half of the committees from Perm' were elected and the other half coopted. Such a procedure was probably not the rule, because the PSR's organizations in this region were infiltrated by the Maximalists, who tended toward a conspiratorial, authoritarian-centralist procedure. The SRs in Ufa even proposed to reorganize the entire regional structure "according to terrorist principles" and to approve only those aspects "of peaceful preparation" for the rising "that did not divert the strength of the party workers from the main task of the struggle."[212] In Siberia hardly any committees were elected; almost all, like the committee in Chita, were appointed.[213] The principle of election was "unconditionally" applied in the Volga region, though modified by co-optation in Simbirsk and Penza.[214] But the majority of less important committees did not use democratic principles, not because they had contempt for democratic principles but because, as the SRs from Tsaritsyn explained, there was "a shortage of workers in the center."[215] Similar internal and external difficulties forced a south Russian oblast conference to recognize honestly the radical consequences and to admit, as early as November 1906, that "the principle of direct and complete elections of leading party institutions ... is impossible to realize under the current conditions of a police state."[216] In other words, the modest beginnings of inner-party democracy as envisioned by the first party congress, the progress of which depended upon the further victory of the revolution, had proven to be a dangerous mirage. Representative for the great majority of local organizations, the south Russian oblast buried another of the PSR's democratic experiments. This experiment did not fail due to a lack of effort, but because of very real and insuperable obstacles.

The Work of Oblast Organizations

A first, overall indicator of the ability of the oblasti to function effectively is the number of general conferences that were held. These conferences were above all to maintain the contacts between the local organizations throughout the nation and

[211] Protokol Nizhegorodskogo gubernskogo s"ezda P.S.-r, in: PI No. 4 (5 January 1907), p. 14f.

[212] See Vremennyi ustav Ufimskoi Organizatsii P.S.-R. Summer 1906, PSR Archive 479; also: PI No. 1 (22 October 1906), pp. 10–11.

[213] Vyderzhki iz doklada Oblastnogo Komiteta na Sibirskii Oblastnoi s"ezd P.S.-R. v aprele 1907 g., PSR Archive 201; Chita. Otchet Sibirskomu oblastnomu s"ezdu, April 1907, PSR Archive 171.

[214] Simbirskii Komitet, Response to an OB survey, PSR Archive 623; the same from Penza, PSR Archive 471, citation there.

[215] Povolzhskaia oblastnaia organizatsiia, PSR Archive 468; Response from Kazan' to an OB survey, PSR Archive 463, as well as from Tsaritsyn, PSR Archive 623, citation there.

[216] Rezoliutsii 3-go Iuzhno-Russkogo oblastnogo s"ezda P.S.-R, in: PI No. 2 (25 November 1906), p. 9.

serve as a medium for middle level decision-making in the party. As far as can be determined, all oblasti organized these costly, democratically legitimated congresses, but did so rarely – as a rule, only two or three times (for example in Siberia, the Urals, the north oblast, the north Caucasus, Caucasus, Don region and also the central industrial region). In Ukraine, during the first year and half after the official establishment of the oblast organization, only a single conference took place. Exceptions were to be found in Belorussia with six conferences and the Volga, which convened even more conferences.[217]

In general, the functional ability of the oblast committees corresponded to the conditions of the respective regional organizations as a whole. The party center in north Russia appeared hardly able to work at all. It had its hands full merely trying to secure its very existence. As typical of the condition of the PSR's local committees, the oblast committee in the Northern Oblast had five elected members in March 1906; by August of the same year, only two remained – despite the co-optation of five more members.[218] The unavoidable conclusion is that the Okhrana was effectively paralyzing the PSR's activity just as the apogee of the revolution had passed. Socialist Revolutionary organizations in the central industrial region were also not very energetic. It was therefore no surprise that the oblast committee here complained of "terrible incoherence" in the local groups. In an effort to tie these groups together and simultaneously draw upon the experience of *oblastniki* who conducted agitation at the local level, the oblast committee actually suggested in July 1907 that the center henceforth no longer reside in one place but rather should operate at the grassroots level and come together only infrequently.[219] In the Urals even the largest party committee, that in Perm', complained about the "unsteady" relationships to the oblast committee and the poor supply of literature.[220] The situation was not much better in Siberia, where the basic necessities to build an organization covering all this vast region were simply nonexistent. The land here was even more sparsely populated than in European Russia; the breadth of its territory was still more extensive; the "dark masses" were even less enlightened' communications between the urban centers and contiguous communities were even more sporadic. The complaints from the committee in Chita offer a good example of what the local party workers faced. It declared that work in the province could hardly be "planned," because the personnel capacity simply did not permit "coverage of the entire ... enormous Transbaikal

[217] See Rapport 1907, p. 53ff. passim and the summary reports on the individual oblasti cited in PSR Archive 676, 553/I, 426, 483, 482, 623, 424, 468, 759, 628, 201.

[218] *Otchet Severnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta*, in: *Otchet po Severnoi Oblasti* P.S.-R., March 1906–1 January, PSR Archive 208.

[219] Circular of the OB pri TsK P.S.-R. No. 5, 24 July 1907: Plan postanovki raboty v Tsentral'noi Oblasti, PSR Archive 197; also: Ocherki rabot v Tsentral'noi Oblasti, PSR Archive 676.

[220] Otchet Permskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., Spring 1906–Spring 1907, PSR Archive 478.

oblast."[221] The provincial groups that were established were "stillborn"; they were incapable of autonomous existence, forcing the city committees to assume all the important tasks.[222] In light of the especially difficult conditions of Siberia, such shortcomings of local committees may seem understandable. In Ukraine, however, a region with another geography and socio-economic structure, the oblast committee was also incapable of accomplishing its tasks. Even the Ukrainian delegate to the party conference in London in 1908 had to admit that this strategically important oblast was "organizationally not in top form."[223] In 1906, for example, the oblast committee consisted of only two people and consequently was overwhelmed by the task of trying to administer eight provinces. So great was the misery that even so experienced a revolutionary as Minor, who was briefly the Central Committee's representative in Ukraine, could not make a significant improvement. Although he did accomplish one task (setting up an oblast paper), the whole enterprise, the product of much careful and difficult work, collapsed soon after he left the area.[224] Hence it is not surprising that numerous committees complained about the poor contact to the oblast committee. The SRs in Ekaterinoslav felt compelled to lodge the accusation that the oblast committee "in no way" fulfilled its duties.[225] It is difficult to identify the causes of such chronic disorganization. In any case, the deficiency of qualified revolutionaries, the excuse offered by the delegate to the London general conference, was hardly a sufficient explanation.

Only a few oblast committees performed satisfactory work. A Central Committee emissary praised the tight and effective leadership of the Southern Oblast and pointedly compared its exemplary success with the failures of the comrades in Ukraine.[226] In the Caucasus, the first oblast committee was incompetent, and the second was decimated by arrests; nevertheless, the regional party center was apparently able to be continuously active.[227] The oblast committee of the Northwest Oblast was remarkable for its ability and judiciousness. One good sign of its competence was the good contact between almost all the local groups and the leadership.[228]

[221] Chita. Otchet Sibirskomu oblastnomu s"ezdu, April 1907, PSR Archive 171.

[222] Sibirskaia oblast'. Iz materialov III-go Sibirskogo oblastnogo s"ezda, in: ZT No. 2 (12 July 1907), pp. 19–21 (citation there); Vyderzhki iz doklada O.K. na Sibirskii Obl. s"ezd, April 1907, PSR Archive 201.

[223] Protokoly 1908, p. 51.

[224] Protokoly 1908, p. 51f.; Lazarev on Minor, in: Sotsialist-revoliutsioner No. 6 (April 1932), pp. 16–18.

[225] Rezoliutsiia Ekaterinoslavskogo Rabochego Soveta P.S.-R., 22 July [1907?], PSR Archive 553/I. See also: Response of the Voronezhskii komitet to the OB survey, PSR Archive 487.

[226] Polozhenie del v iugo-zapadnoi chasti Ukrainy, PSR Archive 482.

[227] Zakavkazskaia oblast'. Iz doklada upolnomochennogo Ts.K. . . ., PI No. 9, pp. 11–13.

[228] See among others the answers from Smolensk to the OK survey, PSR Archive 426, Minsk, PSR Archive 426, Kovno, PSR Archive 623 and Novozybkov, PSR Archive 426.

The extraordinarily rich documentation on Belorussia shows that even an extremely energetic oblast committee could not compensate the inherent weaknesses in party organization. It was especially difficult, if not impossible, to overcome the lack of independence of Socialist Revolutionaries at the grassroots. In accordance with the ideal of democratic decision-making, the SRs at the grass roots were to support the higher-level party organizations both financially and through personal initiative. The reality was quite different. The oblast committee gave the local groups the necessary money, offered organizational help, took care of distributing literature, and loaned professional revolutionaries. Calls for help from below were so numerous that the resources of the regional party leadership were stretched too thin and finally forced it to protest. A circular from November 1906 pointed out that the task of the oblast committee was to support the activities of local organizations. That support, however, was intended only for exceptional cases and solely in matters important for the entire oblast. The party must hold to the rule that the grassroots supports the party leadership.[229]

The Belorussian oblast committee also complained that the calls for help often revealed nothing more than local egoism harmful to the party as a whole. The competition for scarce personnel resources often degenerated to "a purely commercial trade."[230] At the beginning of 1907, the oblast committee warned that "the period of chaotic relationships in which especially those organization that had just joined the party existed in isolation from one another is now behind us. Local patriotism was natural in this period. But now, as every single center is a part of the larger whole, a sense of belonging to a unified party is essential."[231]

Local SRs also caused the oblast committee much difficulty by committing numerous minor sins. Thus, they used slogans and addresses of conspiracy much too sloppily and thereby endangered many groups. Far too many unqualified comrades went underground where they accomplished nothing but became a burden to the party treasury, since – as "professionals" and for humanitarian reasons – the party felt obliged to support the illegals. It often happened that local committees tried to free themselves "from useless ballast" by shunting incompetent party workers off to the OK under the pretense of distributing resources more efficiently.[232]

At the same time, the grassroots of the Northwest Oblast had complaints of its own. They especially accused the leadership of sending incompetent comrades and of lethargy in the struggle against intra-party dissidents. On this last point, the oblast

[229] Pis'mo Ok-ta Sev.-Zap. Oblasti k mestnym komitetam, 15 November 1906, PSR Archive 483, also in: PI No. 5 (15 February 1907), pp. 7–9.

[230] Iz pisem Sev.-Zap. O.K. k mestnym komitetam. PI No. 5, p. 7.

[231] Pis'mo O.K.-ta Sev.-Zap. Oblasti k mestnym komitetam, 6 January 1907, PSR Archive 483.

[232] Pis'mo Sev.-Zap. O.K.-ta k mestnym komitetam (no year given) PSR Archive 483; Sev.-Zap. Oblastnoi Komitet P.S.-R, in: Oblastnye Izvestiia No. 3 (June 1907), pp. 2–3, PSR Archive 442.

committee's hands were largely tied, for the party statute gave the Central Committee the sole right to dissolve committees. An *oblastnik* at a regional conference in November 1907 argued convincingly that the regional centers were in a "miserable situation," adding that "on the one hand they are the 'authority' and on the other – nothing." For example, a raion organization in Briansk strongly infiltrated by Maximalists systematically held the oblast committee at arms length and would not even allow its members to attend the raion meetings. This "abnormal" situation had to be corrected by a new interpretation of the party statute.[233]

Regardless who was to blame for this situation, the local groups and the oblast committee in Belorussia did agree that the party faced serious problems. In February 1907, the party summarized these problems thus:

"1. Infirmity of the purely urban socialist revolutionary organizations caused by a lack of resources, the absence of an element binding peripheral organizations with the center, and by the general conditions of the northwestern region." A further important cause was that the Jewish proletariat stood "completely under the banner of the Social Democratic party." 2. "Extremely weak peasant agitation in the eastern part of the oblast and its complete absence in the western part. 3. Inactivity of the terror brigades. 4. The existence of organizations completely incapable of working with their own resources and therefore requiring external support. 5. Extreme scarcity of material means and the complete absence of sources of re-supply. 6. Poor organizational links between individual party groups, leading to a purely local consciousness that damages the party as a whole. 7. A false understanding of many organizations regarding the rights and duties of the individual organizations in their relationship to the party as a whole."[234]

Conflicts

Aside from external conditions, such as repression from autocracy and difficult geographic conditions, in many areas internal conflicts limited the effectiveness of the PSR's local organizations. One root cause of local conflicts was the expansion of the Maximalist heresy that, as mentioned above, in 1906 reached almost all of the larger SR committees. Maximalism was the cause of much unrest, especially in Belorussia and Ukraine.[235] But there was another, less radical opposition that was democratic and certainly did stand on the party platform and support official tactics even while making common cause with the extreme left. As a rule, it appeared among the

[233] Protokoly zasedanii oblastnogo soveshchaniia Sev.-Zapadn. Oblasti. 11–13 November 1907, PSR Archive 426.

[234] Ekstrennyi s"ezd predstavitelei organizatsii Sev.-Zap. Oblasti P.S.-R., February 1907, PSR Archive 442; printed in: Iz otcheta Sev.-Zap. Oblastnogo Komiteta, in: PI No. 7 (30 March 1907), pp. 11–12, citation p. 11.

[235] See above p. 138.

"working masses" as well as the intelligentsia.[236] This opposition directed its critique above all against the widespread authoritarian methods of the established local leadership. It insisted on elections and worked to ensure that control from below was effective. In Tula the "party folk" protested strongly against the sitting *komitetchiki*, who obviously feared for their sinecures and hence resisted elections. The conflict ended with the victory of the "rabble-rousers" and the introduction of the electoral principle of all party organizations from raion to city committee.[237] The workers in Dvinsk set up a short-lived curial electoral system – i.e., they elected the delegates to the Workers' Union "independent from the [city] conference and the raion committee." They did so because "otherwise the masses ... would be ignored and their relationship to work would cool off."[238] The Workers Union in Kursk complained of poor participation and, together with the peasant agitators, "in the eagerness of youthful enthusiasm" forced out the old party leadership.[239] Finally, the SR workers in St. Petersburg complained vociferously about the "chasm separating the working masses from the party bosses."[240] In 1906, the workers' protest succeeded in giving their "Union, which before had only an advisory function," full voting rights in the city committee. They then became the dominant element in the SR organization in the capital.[241]

These examples demonstrate the effort needed before the working class could participate in the leadership of the local committees. They also illustrate the social divide that continued within the party structure. Neither the distance between the center and the periphery, nor the opposition between the intelligentsia and the masses (which was organizationally expressed by the parallel institutions of local committees and the executive committee of the Workers Union),[242] could be eliminated during the years of revolution. However, it was no longer the alleged passivity of the targets of SR agitation that were at fault for this unhappy result. At the beginning of the Russian revolutionary movement, (and in the first decade of the twentieth century with regard to the peasantry it was probably still true) the passivity of the population was indeed one cause for the lack of success of the PSR's agitation. Still, it was increasingly the case that urban workers in the PSR were largely excluded from party life because of the tendency to build hierarchies, to manifest oligarchic tendencies, and to satisfy a revolutionary lust for office. It was thus no surprise that

[236] Otvety Kaluzhskoi gruppy P.S.-R. na predlozhennye voprosy po punktam, PSR Archive 327.
[237] Tul'skii Komitet PSR, Doklad na oblastnoi s"ezd, 14 September 1907, PSR Archive 326.
[238] Protokoly 7-go ocherednogo s"ezda Severo-Zapadnoi oblasti P.S.-R., 1 July 1907, PSR Archive 426.
[239] Doklad predstavitelia Gubernskogo Komiteta, in: Izvestiia Kurskogo Komiteta No. 1 (1 February 1907), pp. 7–8, PSR Archive 324.
[240] Trud Nos. 1-2 (September 1906), p. 15, PSR archive 472.
[241] Trud No. 12 (April 1907), pp. 13–14; No. 17 (October 1907), pp. 12–14.
[242] See Wildman, Making of a Workers' Revolution, p. 92.

a provincial conference in Khar'kov in 1908 advanced the suggestion to relieve the crisis in the party by changing the PSR into "a purely workers' organization that is not based on the *intelligenty*."[243]

7.3. Membership Strength and Social Geography of the PSR

Information about party membership before 1906 is not available. However, without exception the reports of the local committees indicate that the new party could win only a very limited number of supporters. The second party council in October 1906 made the only attempt to determine how much the revolution had changed the party's membership. The success of this enterprise was modest: no information came from Siberia, North Russia and Ukraine, and the other local committees for the most part gave rather rough estimates. In the absence of better data, however, one must use these admittedly incomplete data.

In the PSR's ten oblast and city organizations for which data are available, the number of party members was about 34,200 (see Table 1 on the facing page). Let us assume that the party in Ukraine had about the same membership as in Belorussia (viz., about 5,100 members). Let us further assume that the two other regions providing no membership data (North Russia and Siberia), as regions marginal to the PSR, each had at best one-quarter the strength of Ukraine and Belorussia. In that case, one arrives at a figure of 42,000 organized supporters. The impressive figure of 12,500 members (twice the figure given for the Volga region) for the Belorussian oblast is ignored, for it is very unlikely that it corresponded with reality. When the party leadership in February 1907 gave a figure of 50,000 members and noted that the Ukrainian SRs were not included in this figure, this figure must be regarded as very optimistic.[244] A figure of 42,000 to 45,000 is more likely.

The official estimate that the party could count on a further 300,000 sympathizers also requires correction, for the statistics of the second party conference only yields a figure of only 65,000. Although these statistics covered just five of the thirteen oblast and city organizations, a figure five-times larger is certainly unrealistic. At the same time, the reports of the local committees do confirm Rubanovich's conclusion that the PSR suffered greatly from a problem common to many parties – namely, "a great gap yawned between the number of those counted to be true members by the oblast committees and those that were regarded as the

[243] Iz protokola ocherednogo Khar'kovskogo gubernskogo s"ezda P.S.-R., sost. v iiune 1906 g., PSR Archive 623.

[244] Protokoly 1907, p. 120. Perrie, who accepts these data, clearly overestimates the PSR's size by adding the membership of the Ukrainian oblast, and so double counting, with the result that she comes up with a total figure of 55–60,000 party members. See Perrie, Social Composition, p. 224.

TABLE 1.: Regional and Social Origin of Socialist-Revolutionary Party Members and Sympathizers 1907

	Number of Gouvernements in that oblast	Number of lower organizations	Number of higher organizations	Number of members from the peasantry	Number of members from the working class	Number of members from the Intelligentsia	Number of members among railway workers	Number of members among pupils	Number of members among soldiers	Total number of members	Number of sympathizers in the country	Number of sympathizers in towns	Number of sympathizers in rayons	Others	Number of delegates, maximum	Number of delegates, minimum
Northern Oblast	6														8	6
North-Western Oblast	10	213	54	4·685	5·932	1·061	697		120	12·500	233	---10·500---			17	
Central Oblast	10									5·000[a]					22	
Southern Oblast	3	138	25	356	1·455	83		215	270	2·451		26	3·650	12·280	12	
Ukraine	9	67													17	
Ural	3		6		1·760	270				2·130					14	
Volgaoblast	9		13	2·760	1·460	880			273	5·100					40	30
Northern Caucasus	3	78	9	1·142	780	148				1·565[b]		10·850	9·600	155	11	
Caucasus	5			155	305	164		29	64	750		11·900	5·300	220	5	
Sibiria	5															
Turkestan	6		11			98			150	320			200		4	
St. Petersburg	1			200	3·000	200				3·400					6	
Moscow	1									2·000					3	

[a] in a separate statistics of the Central Oblast (ibid., Archive PSR 489) only 2·000.

[b] in a separate statistics of the Northern Caucasian Oblast only 830.

This statistics contains some more data, that seem, however, not essential and are in addition to that incomplete.

Source: Materials of the Second Party Council, October 1906, Archive PSR 489

periphery and only supported our program but did not really enter our organization."[245]

No matter how large this gap may have been, in any case the PSR was at least numerically inferior to Social Democracy, which counted 81,000 members. Of course when the split within the RSDRP is taken into account, the Socialist Revolutionaries were indeed slightly stronger than the two Marxist factions of Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, each of whom claimed about 40,000 supporters.[246] To be fair, one must also subtract several thousand Maximalists from the supporters of the Socialist Revolutionaries. Although this correction does make the numerical relationship more favorable to the PSR, Radkey's position that the Social Democrats had three-times as many organized members as the PSR can hardly be maintained.[247]

Insight into the regional distribution of the SR membership is limited by the incompleteness of the data from the second party council. When the Russian northwest is listed as the strongest oblast organizations, this is contradicted by the reports of the committees. More plausible are other figures that put the Volga region at the head of the list with 5,100 active party members, followed by the central industrial region (5,000), St. Petersburg (3,400), the Southern Oblast (2,450), and Moscow (2,000).

Elections to the Second Duma provide additional clues to the geographic zones of PSR influence. These data must be used carefully, however, because in many places the PSR could not put forward its own candidates. The party was compelled to enter electoral alliances with the Trudoviki, the Popular Socialists, and the Social Democrats, and hence it is often impossible to distinguish between the votes for these parties. In addition, it is difficult to determine to which faction the Duma delegates belonged.[248] One may thus see it as mere chance that the PSR was the strongest party to the left of the Kadets only in the provinces of Kursk, Erevan, and Viatka. One can, however, include those regions where the PSR, together with the Trudoviki, sent a majority of the leftist-populist delegates to the Duma (the provinces of Chernigov, Voronezh, Tauride, Saratov, Samara, Astrakhan', and Tver') as well as those regions where the Trudoviki alone won a significant share of the vote. In that case, one can discern three large areas as the core areas of SR neo-populist activities: (1) the black-earth belt between Khar'kov in the west and Samara in the east; (2) the Urals, especially the provinces of Perm' and Viatka, and, (3) south Russia. In the Baltics, Belorussia, Central Industrial Zone, and south Ukraine, the PSR was unable to find significant support. Although the party had some important bases in the Caucasus,

[245] Protokoly 1907, p. 120.

[246] According to Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 13.

[247] Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 63.

[248] A. Smirnov, Kak proshli vybory vo 2-iu Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu (SPb. 1907), pp. 257–279 gave a figure of 28 Socialist Revolutionaries in the second Duma, while Tomsinskii, Bor'ba klassov, pp. 167–169 gave a figure of 38. The PSR itself claimed to have 38 delegates (see Bericht 1907, p. 68f.).

it was unsuccessful in that region as well. For the most part, both sets of data – the statistics of the second party council and the elections to the Second Duma – confirm the socio-geographic structure of the PSR revealed by the overview of SR activities in local organizations.

The question arises of whether there is a general explanation for such a distribution of SR zones of influence. Three hypotheses present themselves.

(1) We can point to the fact that the PSR's area of core support was identical with those provinces of the Russian Empire that were the scene of the great peasant revolts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[249] The agrarian protest during the revolution of 1905–1906 was also concentrated in these same areas. In short, the regions of the PSR's core support were regions where peasant rebellion was endemic.[250] Indeed, such a tradition did make SR agitation more effective, and the PSR did consciously try to tap this legacy and awaken the spirit of *Pugachevshchina*. But simply pointing to the identity of the PSR's regions of core support with regions having a long tradition of peasant revolt is insufficient and unsatisfactory, because the latency of agrarian social protest itself also requires explanation.

(2) A second possibility is a socio-economic hypothesis. It is obvious that the announcement of the beginning of a militant struggle for "Land and Freedom" and against exploitation would find a strong response in those areas where the peasantry was especially burdened with hunger and poverty. This was especially true in the central black-earth zone, that region of chronic crisis in Russian agriculture. The reform of 1861 had taken the most land from the peasants in this region; until 1905, the rural population increased here five-times faster than the amount of land they owned. As a result, "the absence of markets was most pronounced with the corresponding minimal development of industry and urbanization."[251] The conclusion is that the PSR mobilized the population of those agrarian regions that were the most backward, the farthest from markets, and the least developed by capitalism.

Although this hypothesis does have some plausibility and can explain why the PSR had its largest reservoir of members and sympathizers in the northern provinces of Ukraine and the northwestern part of the Volga (Penza, Tambov), upon closer

[249] See P. Avrich, Russian Rebels, 1600 – 1800 (New York, 1972); J.T. Alexander, Autocratic Politics in a National Crisis: The Imperial Russian Government and Pugachev's Revolt (1773–1775) (Bloomington, 1969); V.V. Mavrodin, Krest'ianskaia voina v Rossii v 1773–1775 gg. Vosstanie Pugacheva. Vols. 1–3 (Leningrad, 1961, 1966, 1970).

[250] See the map overviews by: Shestakov, Krest'ianskaia revoliutsiia 1905–07 gg. v Rossii, p. 13; Dubrovskii, Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie, p. 36ff.; S.N. Prokopovich, Kartogrammy agrarnogo dvizheniia v 1905 g., in: Trudy Imperatorskogo vol'nogo ekonomicheskogo obshchestva. SPb., Nos. 1–3 (January–June 1906); M. Perrie, The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905–1907. Its Social Composition and Revolutionary Significance, in: Past and Present, No. 57 (November 1972), pp. 123–155; Perrie, Agrarian policy, p. 118ff.

[251] Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, p. 34, p. 42, citation p. 44.

examination it proves to be unsatisfactory. SR ideas were found in regions that had no shortage of land and indeed areas where the peasants possessed the largest amounts of land in all of Russia – for example, in the Urals or provinces of Saratov and Samara.[252] And it was just in the PSR's core region on the middle Volga that a purely socio-economic hypothesis did not apply because, among other reasons, Stolypin's attempt to create "middle-peasants" producing for the market was showing some positive results.[253]

(3) Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats both saw in the presence of the *obshchina* the decisive factor for the popularity of the PSR.[254] Indeed, it was conspicuous that the regions of neo-populist influence were the same as those where the village commune was dominant – that is, all of European Russia with the exception of Belorussia, southern Ukraine, and the Baltics.[255] This correlation is the most likely explanation for why the Socialist Revolutionaries found such a good response in some areas of the Urals. In the final analysis, it seems that the peasant social and economic order determined the political choices outside of the urban industrial centers. Because the *obshchina* contributed to the structural crisis of agriculture in Tsarist Russia, the socio-economic dimension is also implicit in this hypothesis.

[252] See Drobizhev, Koval'chenko, Murav'ev: Istoricheskaia geografiia, p. 224.

[253] See Nötzold, Wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen, map 2.

[254] See Rapport 1907, p. 241; Maslov, Narodnicheskie Partii, p. 102.

[255] For the distribution of the village communes see the tables by Watters, The Peasant and the Village Commune, p. 147 (from: K.R. Kachorovskii, Russkaia obshchina, (Moscow, 1906), p. 74), and Atkinson, Russian Land Commune, p. 4.

CHAPTER 8

Party Finances

The production and distribution of revolutionary literature, the travel of agitators and propagandists to the provinces, the support of professional revolutionaries and printing presses, the holding of meetings that encompassed several regions, finding secret quarters, and many other daily activities of revolutionary work – all this cost money, a *lot* of money. The party could conduct effective and continuous work only when, in addition to recruiting competent personnel, it could meet its large and steadily rising financial needs. As a revolutionary party that had declared war on the rich and powerful, from the very beginning it was difficult for the PSR to solve its financial problems. Despite these constant difficulties and numerous complaints of the local organizations, observers from other political camps believed that before 1905 and also during the revolution the neo-populist party suffered least from a lack of material resources.[1] The speed with which the party built its organization and its extraordinarily extensive production of literature at an early stage in its history[2] indicate that the party's sources of financing were relatively abundant, indeed probably more lucrative than those of its competitors.

[1] See Maslov, Narodnicheskie partii p. 108.

[2] Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 109, p. 111f. cites some figures to illustrate this point: As early as 1902 the ASL and the PSR together published eleven brochures with 80,000 copies, the PSR alone published 46 titles with 237,000 copies; in 1903 the PSR and the ASL together published four brochures with 30,000 copies and the PSR alone 30 titles with 350,000 copies.

For the years before 1905, it is only possible to determine very roughly, although with a certain probability, where the PSR obtained its financial resources. The journalistic activities of the Agrarian Socialist League and the PSR did produce some modest profits,[3] because they could sell much of this literature in the extensive colony of émigrés. Probably more important was the international prestige as well as the extensive network of contacts of the populist *stariki* ("elders"). They brought not only sympathy to the new party but also significant donations. Above all, the PSR profited from the fact that an unusually large number of its leading members came from the financial élite. Thus, the Gots family was one of the richest in the Russian Empire; Fundaminskii's family was almost as well off as Gots's; and Zenzinov's father had a fortune of more than a million rubles. The heir to Russia's largest tea empire, A.D. Vysotskii, was very close to the party center in exile. A.O. Gavronskaia was the daughter of a millionaire and later the wife of I. Fundaminskii. Both Vysotskii and Gavronskaia belonged to the German Socialist Revolutionaries. All of these people received large, even princely allowances, and they turned over large portions of these allowances to the party treasury.[4] M. Gots was especially generous. Without wanting to call into question Gots's revolutionary talents, one should note that his position as the organizational backbone of the party was in fact due to his ability and willingness to finance a large part of the PSR's early activities.

The estimated one million Russian émigrés in the United States played a noteworthy role in supporting the SR budget. The party thought so much of the émigrés in America that, as early as 1903, it set-up a group of SR sympathizers who were formally part of the Foreign Organization. Another sign of the party's high estimation of émigrés occurred in 1905 when it made the renowned Zhitlovskii head of the SR group in America.[5] Since 1903, money was transferred to the PSR's central treasury. These transfers totaled about $800 by the middle of 1904 and in the revolutionary years of 1905–1906 reached the impressive sum of 400,000 French francs.[6] So promising were the financial resources made possible by the sympathy of the North Americans that in 1904 the PSR sent Breshkovskaia, its most popular figure and the symbol of the revolutionary movement, on a good-will-tour through the United States. The tour was a triumph and brought the party $50,000.[7] Around

[3] In 1903 the ASL booked a profit of 3500 rubles. See RR No. 40 (15 January 1904), pp. 22–23.

[4] See for example Fundaminskii's donation to the Moscow committee in the fall of 1905 (Otvety Zenzinova, NC, No. 232, No. 68 (4) Question 10).

[5] See Amerikanskaia organizatsiia P.S.-R., in: ZT No. 2 (12 July 1907), p. 24 as well as the letters in PSR Archive 144 and 654.

[6] Letter from Ch. Rayevsky, 14 May 1904, PSR Archive 262: Amerikanskaia organizatsiia, in: ZT No. 2, p. 24.

[7] E. Lazarev, Babushka Breshkovskaia, in: RR Nos. 33–34 (January–February 1924), p. 33. Also: A.W. Thompson, R.A. Hart: The Uncertain Crusade. America and the Russian Revolution of 1905. (Amherst, MA., 1970), p. 38ff.

the turn of the year 1906–1907, Gershuni repeated this enterprise but apparently with limited success.[8]

With the outbreak of the revolution, the PSR's already favorable financial situation improved even more. Between 1904 and the end of 1905 the budgets of the SR local organizations increased on average three-times and in some cases, such as in Penza and Moscow, five-times.[9] The January 1905 budget for the SRs in Moscow, for example, was about 2,300 rubles. In Saratov the local committee spent about 220 rubles per month in 1904 and equivalent organizations in 1906 spent about 600 rubles. The sums available to the oblast committees rose at about the same rate.[10] The Central Committee's volume of spending reached 100,000 rubles in 1905 and even 250,000 rubles a year later. For a competent and envious Social Democratic commentator, this sum was enormously high.[11] Almost half of it (120,000 rubles) came from Russian sympathizers[12], 25,000 rubles from the North Americans, and 62,000 rubles from PSR members.[13]

Despite these large budgets and impressive rates of growth, the treasuries of most local organizations were empty. Because of the revolution, the costs of literature, travel, and especially for the greatly increased number of professional party workers rose much faster than income. It became ever more difficult to find new sources of financing, and an increasing number of committees, such as the one in Tsaritsyn, led a "poverty stricken existence."[14] Given this situation of great need, it comes as no surprise that one method of raising funds became ever more popular: expropriation.

[8] See Gershuni's letters from the USA, NC, No. 7, No. 95.

[9] Otchet Penzenskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., in: RR No. 39 (1 January 1904), p. 24; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 413; two reports from the treasury of the Moscow committee, PSR Archive 333; also Otchet Novgorodsk. gruppy P.S.-R. (August 1905–August 1906), PSR Archive 208.

[10] Otchet Saratovskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., in: RR No. 39 (1 January 1904), p. 22; Iuzhnaia oblast' [November 1906], PSR Archive 424. Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R, p. 412ff. collected the published treasury reports. A large number of unpublished reports are to be found in PSR Archive 80, 127, 164, 201, 208, 262, 269, 318, 320, 321, 333, 324, 326, 426, 430, 433, 435, 436, 437, 438, 441, 442, 445, 451, 489, 623.

[11] Maslov, Narodnicheskie partii, p. 108.

[12] Among others the PSR, as a member of the Second International, was due a portion of a collection for the Russian revolution made by German Social Democrats. But while the donors were prepared to give the Bol'sheviki and the Men'sheviki each 20 % of the total and the "Union" and Lithuanian Social Democracy 15 % each, the PSR was to get only 10 %. Consequently, the PSR felt disadvantaged and not recognized as a socialist party and the third conference of the socialist revolutionary foreign organization even considered refusing to accept the money. See: Otchet Zagranichnogo Komiteta, PSR Archive 18; Vypiska iz pis'ma upolnomochennogo TsK v Berline, PSR Archive 654; Protokol III-go s-ezda Zagranichnoi Organizatsii P.S.-R. (End of September 1905), PSR Archive 654, as well as letters in PSR Archive 758/11.

[13] Kratkii denezhnyi otchet C.K. P.S.-r. za 1906 g., in: PI No. 6 (8 March 1907), p. 4.

[14] Response to an OB survey, February 1907, from Tsaritsyn, PSR Archive 623. Similar complaints came out of Penza (471), Ufa (468), Simbirsk (623), Smolensk (426), Kaluga (327), Tula (326), Voronezh (487) and Kazan' (463).

Judging by their resolutions, the majority of local committees supported the official party line and only allowed the "expropriation" of state property. However, it was often the case that the leadership's decisions encountered resistance or at least reservations about the party line. Indeed, half the delegates to a party meeting of the SRs in Kiev could find "no essential difference" between state and private expropriations "because state money is in the end the money of the same petit-bourgeois." Therefore, they voted against the decision of the party council.[15] At a raion conference in St. Petersburg, the majority went so far as to agree to the argument that in light of increasing unemployment, attacks of all kinds presented the only effective "means against hunger."[16]

This radical yet sober assessment of party finances helped make the expropriation of state and private wealth as the most important source of money for local organizations during the years of revolution. Perm' reported, for example, that party work there was financed for a whole year by money taken in robberies.[17] But local committees were not the only ones to fill their coffers in this way; higher-level party organizations also wanted to share in the blessings at least from the robberies they had condoned. Unfortunately for the party as a whole, the regulation that the largest portion of the booty was to go to oblast committees and the Central Committee (according to a predetermined method of distribution)[18] did not lead to improvements in the regional and central party budgets. Because of this distribution method, it was advantageous for many local organizations either to keep their expropriations secret[19] or simply to refuse to fulfill their duties to turn over money from the robberies.[20] Local egoism was victorious over party reason.

In the long run, expropriation proved unable to alleviate the PSR's financial crisis. What expropriation did do was accelerate a development that, towards the end

[15] Protocol of a conference of the PSR's Kiev committee from 19–23 October 1906, PSR Archive 489.

[16] Rezoliutsii, vynesennye na sobranii gorodskogo raiona Peterburgskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., Summer 1907, PSR Archive 441.

[17] Otchet Permskogo Komiteta P.S.-R., Spring 1906–Spring 1907, PSR Archive 478.

[18] Pis'mo OB pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 14 from 27 October 1907, PSR Archive 197; Pamiatnaia knizhka I p. 52. The Central Committee was to control sums over 500 rubles. The Central Committee was also to get 3/4 of the booty from larger robberies; the OK was left with 25 % or a maximum of 20,000 rubles.

[19] Chernov expressed regret at this practice in his Central Committee report at the PSR's general conference in London in 1908; Protokoly 1908, p. 60.

[20] A robbery commando of the Sevastopol' committee refused to give up 17,000 expropriated rubles claiming that the OK and the Central Committee had "never" helped them and that the commando "did not know" the OK and the Central Committee. (See: Sevastopol'skaia gorodskaia konferentsiia, 25 May 1907, PSR Archive 448). Conflict arose in 1908 with the distribution of 261,185 rubles that were expropriated with Central Committee approval in Tashkent. The OK gave the Central Committee 105,700 rubles but it held on to the rest even though a decision of the fourth party council said that the OK was only supposed to keep a maximum of 20,000 rubles. See: Protokoly IV-go soveta partii (August 1908) PSR Archive 469.

of 1905, became ever more important and hurt the party greatly – a distancing of the liberal intelligentsia from Neo-Populism. An interesting article in the party's central paper offered this diagnosis of the problem. Educated society became afraid of its own courage the more the "social character" of the revolution became apparent. Educated society was afraid that the movement it initially supported could turn against itself and therefore began to support other political groups, namely the Kadets.[21] In a philippic against the maximalist fever for expropriation at the PSR's second party congress, Gershuni described the resulting *circulus vitiosus*: "The organizations have no money and so expropriations are necessary. But expropriations scare away large numbers of sympathizers and consequently donations continually decrease." What was thought to be a means for a short-term source of emergency funding in the long term ripped deeper holes in the party's financing. It was in this sense, and not only in the intended moral sense, that Gershuni warned against the damage that "millions" could not make good.[22]

Even if successful robberies in exceptional cases made up for the deleterious effects cited by Gershuni, the successes only gave the local organizations a temporary breathing spell. Money acquired in "revolutionary expropriations" was available, like donations, only irregularly, could not be calculated in advance, and hindered long-term planning and forced the local organizations "to work in spurts."[23] A careful comment from Kursk on the PSR's financial situation noted: "One must admit that the absence of regular sources of income at present heavily damages daily work: (1) it is difficult to guarantee the continuity of the material support for day-to-day operations, and, (2) planning the development of the organization is hindered at every turn. When everything is dependent on irregular contributions the following ensues: a large sum of money comes from somewhere and feverish activity then breaks out ... But as soon as the money is all spent, a period of mass collapse sets in."[24]

In such cases, work at the local level was only possible when higher party authorities provided financial and personnel support. Unfortunately, this assistance tended to strengthen the dependency of the local committees, a source of frequent com-

[21] Griv., Sredstva Partii. (K rezoliutsii soveta o denezhnykh delakh), in: PI No. 3 (5 December 1906), pp. 3–6, here p. 3; Diadia, Vopros o sredstvakh, in: Izvestiia Kurskogo Komiteta P.S.-R, No. 1 (1 February 1907), p. 4, PSR Archive 324, partially printed in: PI No. 10 (24 September 1907), pp. 9–10.

[22] Protokoly 1907, p. 149ff., citation from: G.A. Gershuni, Ob ekspropriatsiiakh, NC, No. 7, No. 95, also: ZP No. 4552 f. 1. See also Breshkovskaia's comments on the same theme in Protokoly 1907, p. 134ff. By accusing the local organizations of regarding the warnings of the party council "with a small laugh" and of rejecting expropriations only in "a purely formal way," Gershuni confirmed that many of these robberies were directed at private property, i.e. were directed at forbidden targets.

[23] So the response of the PSR's committee in Penza to the OB, PSR Archive 472.

[24] Diadia, Vopros o sredstvakh, PI No. 10, p. 10.

plaint, and thereby reinforce their lack of initiative. The central party paper made a good point by commenting that "party finances are, so to speak, turned upside down. The party does not support the center but in fact the center to a large degree supports the party."[25] A thorough reform appeared to be unavoidable.

The PSR's second party council meeting of October 1906 recognized the necessity of reform. It introduced membership dues as a source of regular income. In addition, it required each party organization to give ten percent of its income to the Central Committee.[26] Similar regulations at the regional level required local organizations to give 10 to 15 percent of their budgets to the next higher level up to the oblast committee.[27] Individual groups were free to set the levels of membership dues as they saw fit. As a rule, dues were fixed between 1 and 2 percent of monthly wages, whereby it was often the case that a rigid progression for those with higher wages was added.[28]

These reforms may have been appropriate but they proved ineffective. The necessary discipline to compel members to pay their dues existed only in a few groups (primarily in the Workers Unions).[29] The great majority of committees continued to live from donations[30] and, to a very limited degree, from their own resources.[31] A financial report of the northwest region for the period from October 1906 to February 1907 pointed out that the lower-level organizations contributed a mere 98 rubles to the total income 1,124 rubles. And even this sum was designated a "generous overestimation." The oblast committee complained that it continued to live from Central Committee resources given "by chance."[32] In many cases, local committees

[25] Griv., Sredstva Partii, PI No. 3, p. 3. To illustrate this situation: In June of 1907 the Central Committee supported the committee in Nizhnii-Novgorod with 205 rubles out of a total budget for the local committee of 376 rubles (PSR Archive 320). Of the 1171 rubles available to the St. Petersburg committee between February and April 1905, 933 rubles were donated by sources outside of Russia (PSR Archive 436). In the total budget of the Tula committee for April 1906 of 964 rubles, 509 rubles were given by the OK of the central oblast' (PSR Archive 326). And for the period November–December 1906 the OK of the Ukraine supported the budget of the Socialist Revolutionaries in Kursk with 300 rubles out of a total of 955 rubles (PSR Archive 324).

[26] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 52f.

[27] See for example: Protokoly zasedanii oblastn. soveshchanii Sev.-Zapadn. Oblasti, 11–13 November 1907, PSR Archive: Proekt ustava Nizhegorodskoi gubernskoi organizatsii, PSR Archive 320; Organizatsionnyi ustav Smolenskoi organizatsii, PSR Archive 623.

[28] See for example: Otchet Permskogo komiteta P.S.-R., PSR Archive 478; Iuzhnaia oblasť, PSR Archive 424.

[29] This was the case in Nizhnii-Novgorod (Protokoly 1908, p. 45), Briansk (Ob osobennostiakh raboty v Sev.-Zap.krae, in: PI No. 8, p. 12) and according to the OB survey from February 1907 in Tver' (PSR Archive 428), Vladimir (553/I) and in the Urals (586).

[30] According to an OB survey of the organizations of: Feodosia (PSR Archive 553/II), Voronezh (487), Tula (326), Smolensk (426), Ufa (486) and Penza (471).

[31] According to an OB survey in : Kaluga (PSR Archive 327, 328), Tula (326), Smolensk (426), Tsaritsyn (623), Simbirsk (623) and Minsk (426).

[32] Severo-Zapadnyi Oblastnoi Komitet, otchet, PSR Archive 442.

were responsible for perpetuating the sad plight of party finances either because they tolerated the non-payment of dues or because they refused their duties to forward money to the next higher organization. At the same time, SRs at the grassroots could plausibly argue that self-financing of local party operations was impossible, given the high rate of unemployment, the low wages of most urban party members, and the poverty of the peasants. However, the party leadership justifiably responded that liberation demands sacrifice and that one must make the masses used to the idea that "they cannot wait until someone brings them land and freedom."[33]

Similarly, the party failed to implement the proposal to support local party finances by selling literature and setting up publishing companies. Hardly any committee chose this very promising and organizationally relatively simple method of earning money, for the revolutionaries at the grassroots despised such activity as the "petit-bourgeois" work of shopkeepers and unworthy of true revolutionaries. The party's central paper criticized such arrogance, and the leadership correctly denounced this dangerous anachronism as an attitude that originated in times when "legal literature could not express the ideas of the party and the legal distribution of literature was a form of *kul'turnichestvo*." Underground workers were accustomed to identifying revolutionary work with conspiracy and even during the revolution did not change their minds. Their lack of interest in the legal sale of books was so great and deeply rooted that this business "to a large degree slipped out of the party's hands" and shifted to commercial enterprises. The article cited above complained that one was often confronted with the "sad picture" that party members bought party literature in private shops. Even the "blackhundredists" earned from the revolution.[34]

Because the reforms failed, donations fell off, and the "time of expropriations was past,"[35] by the end of the revolution the SR local organizations had no other sources of income than collections, talks, lectures, social evenings, and similar meetings.[36] But the money generated by these sources could not even cover the their reduced needs. The grassroots became still more of a burden to the central party treasury until its resources too were exhausted. As early as June 1907, the Organization Bureau announced in a circular that it would no longer assume the travel costs for the delegates to the third party council.[37] In August, the Central Committee

[33] N.M., K voprosu o material'nom polozhenii nashikh organizatsii, in: Izvestiia S.-Z. O.K. P.S.-R. No. 4 (July 1907), pp. 2–3; Griv., Sredstva partii, PI No. 3, p. 3.

[34] Griv., Sredstva partii, citation, pp. 4–5.

[35] According to a regretful "oblastnik" at an oblast' conference in November 1907 (Protokoly zasedanii oblastn. soveshchaniia Se.-Zap. Oblasti, 11–13 November 1907, PSR Archive 426).

[36] See the cited answers to the OB survey in February 1907 in Chap 5, note 46.

[37] Letter from the OB from June 1907, PSR Archive 197.

announced that it could no longer subsidize foreign travel for Russian comrades[38] and in October it threatened to reduce its activity. It also warned comrades at the grassroots that "the central party treasury is in a very serious condition. It is necessary to limit essential functions of the whole party; no help is forthcoming from the local organizations." Once again the party leadership criticized the "extremely unequal distribution" of financial resources in the party: "While in some oblasti there is literally hunger and party work has stopped, in others the money that was gained (for example, through expropriations) is treated as the sole property of the respective oblast and respective organizations – in violation of party principles and directives of the party council."[39]

Unfortunately, this critique brought few results. After the party exhausted the reserves kept "almost exclusively by personal contacts," in December 1907 it had to terminate publication of the papers *Narodnaia Armiia* ("The People's Army"), *Za Narod* ("For the People") and "*Trud*" ("Work").[40] In 1908, the crisis became acute, as the Central Committees monthly budget of 30,000 rubles (the figure for 1907) fell to a low of 7,000 rubles. Such a situation forced the leadership to consider the desperate option of sending Central Committee members to Russia to beg alms from local organizations, who themselves often did have a kopeck left, for the "dying party treasury".[41] During the summer of 1908, the income of the SR leadership increased to 23,000 rubles. But Chernov's joy at the London General Conference was premature. The recovery did not last for long, and the financial and organizational condition of the party did not improve. The Central Committee's budget even shrunk to its pre-1905 level. The sources of money were the same as in the early phase. After 1909 the few remaining resources came, as far as one can tell, from the donations of friendly magnates, namely from the Moscow tea millionaire Vysotskii as well as a certain Krasnikov, who after 1910–1911 apparently became the PSR's most important benefactor.[42] Additional financial support came from collections in the United States[43] and from the private resources of leading Socialist Revolutionaries. This new money enabled the PSR to survive in the political arena, but not much

[38] Ot TsK, in: ZT No. 31 (1 August 1907), p. 13.

[39] Pis'mo O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 14 (27 October 1907), PSR Archive, also: NC, not sorted.

[40] Pis'mo O.B. pri Ts.K. P.S.-R. No. 17 from 7 December 1907, PSR Archive 582.

[41] Protokoly 1908, p. 60. Also: Letuchii Listok. Izd. Parizhskoi gruppy sodeistviia P.S.-R., No. 2 (16 January 1908), NC not sorted.

[42] Among others Krasnikov financed the "Sotsialist Revoliutsioner," published since 1910. He also made possible the publication of Chernov's new theoretical journal "Zavety" (The Legacy). See: OA XVI b (3) f. 1B and XVII i f. 3c. Police agents named the Moscow millionaires Shakhov and M.J. Tseitlin as financiers for the PSR. Tseitlin also belonged to the circle of Heidelberg student friends. See: OA XXVb f. 2 doc.i, f. 3 docs. e and c.

[43] See: OA XXV a f. 2 doc. d where the sum of the donations collected in 1911–13 was given as $ 21,000.

more. The limitation of the central party paper *Znamia Truda* ("Banner of Labor") to bi-monthly publication after 1912 was above all due to the PSR's precarious financial condition.[44] Just as unrest erupted in Russian cities and a second revolution was in the offing, the SRs had to leave the field of publicity to others. At this very time, Lenin risked the expensive enterprise of launching the first Social Democratic daily, *Pravda*.[45]

[44] Several documents in OA XVIb (3) f. 1B suggest this conclusion.

[45] See Elwood, Russian Social Democracy, p. 231ff.; V.T. Loginov, Leninskaia "Pravda" (1912–1914 gg.) (Moscow, 1972).

CHAPTER 9

The Social Characteristics of the PSR

In order to gain an understanding of the PSR's social structure that goes beyond the hints contained in reports by local committees, we have made a representative selection of biographical data. These data come primarily from the following sources:

1. lists of those wanted by the Okhrana between 1900 and 1916;[1]

2. a membership list of the "Society of Political Prisoners and Exiles";[2]

[1] OA. XIII d (2) f. 20–61. The rest of the very extensive personnel cards proved to be useless for this purpose.

[2] Politicheskaia katorga i ssylka. Biograficheskii spravochnik chlenov obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssyl'no-poselentsev (Moscow, 1929), a substantially expanded edition was published in Moscow in 1934. This list is probably the only bibliographical reference work on revolutionary history that contains a significant number of Socialist Revolutionaries. Perrie in "Social Composition" bases her statistics on this list and came up with a figure of 1024 relevant persons. These data are extraordinarily comprehensive and consequently they are very valuable. Nevertheless, it appears that Perrie failed to consider some serious disadvantages. We must take into account that "Politicheskaia katorga" listed only members of the "Obshchestvo politkatorzhan i ssyl'noposelentsev", and this means that former Socialist Revolutionaries who thought it wise to conceal their political past or those who for other reasons did not join the organization are not contained in this list. In addition, those PSR members who did not live until the 1920s, that is all those who died in World War I or in the Civil War, are also missing. Finally, the Socialist Revolutionary emigrants were not counted. And because the more prominent PSR politicians were strongly represented among the emigrants there is "bias" in the

3. numerous obituaries in the socialist revolutionary press before and after 1917;[3]

4. frequent biographical comments in the memoir literature and Spiridovich's book.[4]

These sources provide information on 942 persons. Additional information was contained in surveys conducted at the PSR's first general conference in August 1908 and the third party congress in May 1917.[5]

An analysis of this material aims above all to reveal the social and age differences between members of the separate functional levels of party organizations. To accomplish this task, it seemed appropriate to divide the total sample into four groups. SRs listed as simple members were counted as belonging to the grassroots. Party members were especially numerous in the wanted lists of the political police. Local leaders include all those who belonged to a PSR city or provincial committee. Regional leaders were party members who either functioned as *oblastniki* or assumed central leadership positions at the regional or national levels. The senior party leadership consisted of the members of the Central Committee, the Organization Bureau, the Central Peasant Bureau, and the Central Military Bureau as well as a circle of revolutionaries close to the Central Committee and from whose ranks came the "plenipotentiaries." This group was comprised of forty persons.[6] A special group consists of party members who dedicated themselves exclusively to terrorist activity and who belonged to the central "Fighting Organization." This category of party members was supplemented by a PSR list of all acts of terror. Unfortunately, this list contains little information about the social background of the terrorists.[7]

The degree to which this information is representative of the various groups is variable. There is no question that the data on the party leadership and members of the regional organizational level is the most complete and comprehensive. But the activists of the local committees are probably also well represented. In interpreting

statistics concerning the higher party leadership. And Perrie defines the "local leaders" so broadly that their social characteristics hardly differ from those of simple party members.

[3] These obituaries were found in ZT 1907–14 and RR 1920–31.

[4] Chernov, Pered burei; Zenzinov, Iz zhizni; Spiridovich, Partii S.-R.

[5] Protokoly 1908, pp. 207–208; Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (Petrograd, 1917), Appendix. The original questionnaires for the London conference are in PSR Archive 649.

[6] Namely: V.K. Agafonov, A.I. Al'tovskii, A.A. Argunov, N.D. Avksent'ev, E.F. Azef, A.N. Bakh, B.G. Bilit, S.M. Bleklov, A.O. Bonch-Osmolovskii, E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, V.M. Chernov, A.Iu. Feit, I.I. Fundaminskii, A.V. Gedeonovskii, G.A. Gershuni, A.R. and M.R. Gots, Ia.L. Iudelevskii, D.A. Khilkov, P.P. Kraft, E.E. Lazarev, V.I. Lebedev, B.N. Lebedev, V.V. Leonovich, S.F. Mikhalevich, O.S. Minor, M.A. Natanson, V.S. Pankratov, A.I. Potapov, A.V. Pribylev, N.I. Rakitnikov, I.A. Rubanovich, V.V. Rudnev, B.V. Savinkov, M.F. Seliuk, L. Shishko, S.N. Sletov, N.S. Tiutchev, F.V. Volkhovskii, V.M. Zenzinov. See the short biographies in Appendix B on page 375ff. of those members in this leadership for whom sufficient information is available.

[7] Pamiatnaia knizhka sotsialista-revoliutsionera II, pp. 5–23.

this data, a comparison with Perrie's results and with Lane's study of Social Democracy[8] offer the possibility of highlighting the specific characteristics of individual parties.

9.1. Generations of the PSR

A new study pointedly summarizes the relationship between age and modern revolutionary movements as follows: "No revolutionary party with original objectives survives from one generation to the next, unless it can seize power and become a ruling party. Each revolutionary party is the instrument of one political generation." This is especially true for the socialist revolutions of the recent past (not for the classic bourgeois revolutions), because only within one generation is it possible to establish a sufficiently precise, motivating consensus over the conception of the post-revolutionary society. In other words, it is difficult to hand down a politically operable concrete utopia from one generation to the next.[9]

However, Table 2a on the following page demonstrates that the PSR contradicts such a hypothesis (unless one is prepared to expand the meaning of the term political generation so much that it becomes useless). The neo-populist movement brought together not only different currents of the populist tradition but also several age cohorts. Consequently, there was an extremely wide span between the oldest and the youngest generation. When the age cohorts representing the same political socialization are separated, one can identify roughly four generations: the Narodniki, the Narodovol'tsy, as well as the older and younger Socialist Revolutionaries.

The old Narodniki (i.e., those born between 1840 and 1855) were the spiritual fathers and teachers of the PSR. Starting from the late 1880s, they educated a new populist generation. The older generation influenced successors in different ways and in different regions; as exiles on the Volga, in the Urals, and in Siberia, the old Narodniki organized the youth into political circles and taught them the revolutionary tradition of the 1870s; as exiles in foreign countries, the older revolutionaries worked as journalists seeking to influence the next generation of the opposition. In the 1890s, they were the godfathers to the first neo-populist groups. Indeed, these newly constituted groups owed their rapid expansion largely to the work of old Narodniki. We have already mentioned the very prominent role of *stariki* in the PSR, such as Breshkovskaia, Volkhovskii, Shishko, and Natanson. Tiutchev, Lazarev, Mikhalevich, and probably Bonch-Osmolovskii also belonged to the leading cadres. Even though the former adherents of Chaikovskii, Lavrov, and Bakunin as a whole

[8] Perrie, Social Composition; Lane, Roots of Russian Communism.

[9] L.S. Feuer, Generations and the Theory of Revolution, in: Survey 18 (1972) No. 3 (84), pp. 161–188, here p. 187. Emphasis from me.

TABLE 2A.: Age Structure of Socialist-Revolutionary Party Members

Born	Age in 1905	Rank and File		Local Leaders		Regional Leaders		Party Leadership		Fighting Organization		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1840–50	55–65					1	2.0	3	8.5			4	0.4
51–55	50–54	3	0.5					4	10.0	2	3.7	9	1.0
56–60	45–49	5	0.8	1	0.7	4	7.8	7	17.5			17	1.8
61–65	40–44	11	1.7	4	2.8	4	7.8	5	12.5			24	2.5
66–70	35–39	14	2.1	7	5.0	3	5.9	6	15.0			30	3.2
71–75	30–34	37	5.6	6	4.3	2	3.9	4	10.0	3	5.5	52	5.5
76–80	25–29	95	14.5	22	15.6	6	11.8	5	12.5	9	16.7	137	14.5
81–85	20–24	180	27.4	30	21.3	11	21.6	5	12.5	7	13.0	233	24.7
86–90	15–19	141	21.5	17	12.1	2	3.9					160	17
91–95		23	3.5	2	1.4							25	2.7
96–00		2	0.3									2	0.2
no data		145	22.1	52	36.9	18	35.3	1	2.5	33	61.1	249	26.4
total		656	100.0	141	100.1	51	100.0	40	100.0	54	100.0	942	99.9
median		22 years		23.4 years		27.3 years		38.7 years		26.6 years		22.7 years	

TABLE 2B.: Age Structure of Delegates to the First All-Party Conference of the PSR, 1908

Born	Age	N	%
1843–47	61–65	1	1.6
48–53	55–60	4	6.6
53–58	50–55	1	1.6
58–63	45–50	4	6.6
63–68	35–40	5	8.2
73–78	30–35	7	11.5
78–83	25–30	10	16.4
83–88	20–25	19	31.1
88–	–20	8	13.1
no data		1	1.6
total		1	1.6
median	31.8 years	61	99.9

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207

TABLE 2C.: Age Structure of Socialist-Revolutionary Terrorists

Age	N	%
15–19	19	24.7
20–24	33	42.9
25–29	11	14.3
30–34	10	13.0
35–39	3	3.9
40–44		
45–49		
50–54	1	1.3
total	77	100.1
median	22.4 years	

Source: Pamyatnaya knizhka sotsialista-revolyutsionera. Vyp. II Paris 1914, p. 8–20.

TABLE 2D.: Age Structure of Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR, May 1917

Born	Age	N	%
1858–61	56–59	4	1.7
62–66	51–55	10	4.1
67–71	46–50	3	1.2
72–76	41–45	11	4.6
77–81	36–40	42	17.4
82–86	31–35	61	25.3
87–91	26–30	83	34.4
92–98	19–25	27	11.2
total		241	99.9
median	31.7 years		

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

TABLE 2E.: Activities of the Delegates to the First All-Party Conference of the PSR (1908) in Other Groups prior to Entering the PSR

Organization	N	Organization	N
no other	36	Black Repartition ("Chernyi peredel")	1
Peasants' Union ("Krest'ianskii soiuz")	1	Will of the people ("Narodnaia Volia")	11
Soldiers' Union ("Voennyi soiuz")	1	Chaikovskii-Circle ("Kruzhok Chaikovtsev")	1
RSDRP	3	Agrarian-socialist League ("Agrarno- sotsialisticheskaia Liga")	1
Social Democracy (non-member)	1	"all stages of the 70s"	1
Dashnaktsutiun	2		
Socialist-Revolutionary Union ("Soiuz S.-R.")	2	total	61

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207f.

TABLE 2F.: Activities of Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR (May 1917) in other Parties prior to Entering the PSR

Organization	N	%
Zemlya i Volya	1	3.2
Narodnaya Volya	8	25.8
Social Democracy	13	41.9
Maximalists and Anarchists	5	16.1
Dashnaktsutyun	1	3.2
People's Socialists (Narodno-sotsialisticheskaya Partiya)	1	3.2
Proletariat	1	3.2
Zionists-Socialists	1	3.2
total	31	99.8

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

comprised only a relatively small portion of the party élite (17.5 percent of the party leadership and 6 to 8 percent of the delegates to the first general conference, as shown in Table 2a on page 266 and Table 2b on page 267) and in the total sample are numerically insignificant, their real importance was in fact much greater.

Judging from Lane's results, the RSDRP lacked members with experience comparable to that of the PSR's oldest members. Relatively few of the known narodniki found their way through Plekhanov's *Chernyi peredel* (black repartition) to the Social Democratic movement and most of these later joined the Menshevik faction. At the PSR's first general conference in 1908, 24.1 percent of the participants could look back at more than 20 years of active revolutionary work (Table 2g on the next page). The analogous figure for the delegates to the RSDRP's fifth party congress in 1907 was only about 3 percent.[10]

While the former narodniki in the PSR are best described as sources of inspiration, the representatives of those born in 1855–1870 tended to assume the role of initiators. They all experienced their political socialization during the period of the decay of Zemlia i Volia and represented the its heritage that, almost without exception, they affirmed. These Narodovol'tsy made up approximately 45 percent of the national and 21.5 percent of the regional party leadership; hence they were a group of significant size. But their actual influence was greater than their numbers would seem to indicate, for outstanding revolutionaries like M. Gots, Minor, Rubanovich, Rakitnikov and Argunov were members of this age cohort. Further influential per-

[10] Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 34, p. 36.

TABLE 2G.: Delegates to the First All-Party Conference of the PSR (1908) by Years of Revolutionary Activity and Years of PSR-Membership

within the Revolutionary Movement			within the PSR		
Years	N	%	Years	N	%
2–5	14	24.1	less than 1		
5–10	17	29.3	1–2	3	4.9
10–15	10	17.2	2–3	4	6.6
15–20	3	5.2	3–4	9	14.8
more than 20	14	24.1	4–5	13	21.3
			5–7	10	16.4
			more than 7	5	8.2
			no data	5	8.2
total	58	99.9		61	100.1

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P. S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207

TABLE 2H.: Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR (May 1917) by Years of Membership

Party Entry	N	%	Party Entry	N	%
Narodovol'tsy	4	1.6	1910	2	0.8
since Founding of the Party	20	7.9	1911	2	0.8
1901–04	66	26.1	1912	8	3.2
1905	63	24.9	1913	6	2.4
1906	36	14.2	1914	3	1.2
1907	12	4.7	1915	2	0.8
1908	6	2.4	1916	6	2.4
1909	5	2.0	1917	12	4.7
total				253	100.1

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

TABLE 21.: Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR (May 1917) by Years of Illegal Activity

Years	N	%
less than 1	23	26.7
1	19	22.1
2	20	23.3
3	10	11.6
4	6	7.0
6	4	4.7
8	1	1.7
9	1	1.7
11	2	2.3
total	86	101.1

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

TABLE 22.: Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR (May 1917) by Years in Exile

Years	N	%
1	3	20.0
2	1	6.7
3	3	20.0
4	1	6.7
5	2	13.3
7	2	13.3
8	2	13.3
9	1	6.7
total	15	100.0

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

TABLE 2K: Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR (May 1917) by Functions held

Function	N	%
Member of Committee	103	59.9
Chairman of Committee	43	25.0
Vice-Chairman of Committee	9	5.2
Member of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Council	17	9.9
total	172	100.0

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

sonalities were the founders of *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'* ("Revolutionary Thought")[11] – Ia. L. Iudelevskii and V.K. Agafonov as well as A.N. Bakh, Feit, and Bilit from the circle close to the Central Committee. Given such a substantial presence of former Narodnaia Volia members in the PSR, it should come as no surprise that even at the third party congress in May 1917, 7 percent of the delegates were Narodovol'tsy (see Table 2d on page 268, Table 2f on page 269, and Table 2h on page 270). The Narodovol'tsy were the hard core of the SR elite and decisively influenced the neo-populist movement.

Not surprisingly, this generation was also not well represented in the RSDRP.[12]

Socialist Revolutionaries, in a more limited sense, were those party members who did not begin their political careers in any of the early populist groups. Their political consciousness was awakened toward the end of the 1880s and especially in the 1890s by the experience of the first effects of industrialization; effects such as the economic crisis at the beginning of the decade, the creation of an urban proletariat, increasing poverty in the cities, growing unrest in the peasantry, and the conflict between Marxists and Populists over the chances of the development of capitalism in Russia. Those born between 1870 and 1890 were the supporters of the party organization at the grassroots. By 1917, they comprised 75 percent of the cadres of the socialist revolutionary party (Table 2d on page 268) and were the real opponents of the Social Democrats.

This group was clearly divided into at least two political generations. The transition from the 1870s to the 1880s marked the dividing line between these two groups. Such prominent personalities as Gershuni, Chernov, Sletov, Kraft, Leonovich, and Azef belonged to the older group. Altogether, this older generation accounted for

[11] See below p. 307ff.

[12] Lane, Roots of Communism, p. 34.

approximately 12.5 percent of the party leadership, 30 percent of the participants of the first general conference, 16 percent of the regional, 20 percent of the local leaders, and 20 percent of the party grass roots (Table 2a on page 266 and Table 2b on page 267).

The younger socialist revolutionary generation consisted of those who held the fate of the party in their hands during the Revolution of 1917. Most of these party members made their début during the general rehearsal in 1905; after that experience, the most talented made their way to the heights of the leadership. The latter included the "German Socialist Revolutionaries" Zenzinov, Avksent'ev, Fundaminskii, A. Gots, and Rudnev, one can cite as well B.N. Lebedev and V.I. Lebedev (the agitator of the army and Volkhovskii's assistant in publishing the soldiers' paper *Za Narod*).[13] At least for these representatives of the new generation of Populists, one can discern common political and tactical opinions that were the foundation of their group homogeneity. They all joined the right opposition that had arisen in the party since 1909; they argued for a legal, anti-terrorist tactic; during World War I, most were "Defenders of the Fatherland"; in 1917 they again stood in the party's right-wing or right-center. The question remains open whether this remarkably uniform development of impatient revolutionaries and apostles of militant struggle (Zenzinov and A. Gots were members of Azef's Fighting Organization, Rudnev made a name for himself during debates at the first party congress with maximalist speeches) to advocates of peaceful reform and evolution was the result of their common belief in the neo-Kantian ethics and Weltanschauung. Without question, international Socialism evinced a close relationship between revisionism and neo-Kantianism.[14] Nevertheless, most of the leaders on the SR left and Maximalism (e.g., Sokolov and Mazurin) also came from this generation.

Table 2a on page 266 and Table 2b on page 267 quite clearly indicate that the younger Neo-Populists (i.e., those born between 1880 and 1890) formed the core of the PSR's cadres inside Russia. They made up 49 percent of the grass roots, 33 percent of the local, 25 percent of the regional leadership, and 40 percent of the participants at the first general party conference. It was only at the level of party leadership that they were barely represented (12.5 percent). One good explanation for their lack of representation in the party leadership was that, before World War I, the up-and-coming Socialist Revolutionaries were simply too young to assume leadership tasks at such a high level. Further light is shed on the party's generational structure by this absence of the very young in the party

[13] See: G.Ia. Aronson and others, Pamiati V.I. Lebedeva. Sbornik statei (New York, 1958),

[14] See: H.-J. Steinberg, Sozialismus und Sozialdemokratie. Zur Ideologie der Partei vor dem 1. Weltkrieg. (Hannover, 1967), p. 98ff.; H.J. Sandkühler, R. de la Vega (Eds.): Marxismus und Ethik. Texte zum neukantianischen Sozialismus. (Frankfurt, 1970).

leadership, the correlation between age and one's place in the apparatus was very strong. As a whole, the PSR was an extraordinarily young party. According to Table 1 on page 249, in 1905, the average age of all Socialist Revolutionaries was 22.7 years, and the average age of simple party members was 22 years. The accurate statistics on assassinations show an average age of SR bomb throwers to be just 22.4 years, thus confirming what is known about the special attraction of political terror for the young (Table 2c on page 267). The age rose for leaders at the local level (23.4 years), at the regional level (27.3), and central party leadership (38.7). The delegates to the first general conference in 1908 were on average 31.8 years old.[15] Such a close correlation between age and party rank indicates a very limited degree of inner-party mobility. This correlation suggests that the movement between the organizational levels was low and that the circulation of élites was limited by the significant distance between the center and periphery. It appears that the PSR had a "gerontocracy" consisting, above all, of the veterans of Narodnaia Volia and the earliest Socialist Revolutionaries. Seniority opened the way to party leadership. It was no accident that the schism of the Maximalists as well as the faction building on the right was, among others, a generational conflict.[16]

It appears that a hierarchy based on age in this way did not exist in the RSDRP. Indeed, it was especially the Bolshevik faction that was notable for its relative homogeneity with respect to age and the openness between party levels. The average age of the Leninist delegates to the fifth party congress in 1907 was only 27.1. And the Menshevik delegates were, with an average age of 29.2 years, somewhat younger than the comparable participants of the PSR's London conference.[17] Thus the observation is even more astounding: the simple SD party member was on average significantly older than his SR party colleague, with the Mensheviks again holding seniority.[18] It is highly speculative to infer a degree of revolutionary radicalism from such differences, as Lane hints. Still, these generational differences deserve

[15] Perrie, Social Composition, came to slightly different results on the basis of the biographies in "Politicheskaia katorga." She set the average age of all listed Socialist Revolutionaries at 21.1 years and that of the local leaders at 21.8. The last figure is probably too low due to the "bias" mentioned above of her data. According to a reliable source, the "common" political delinquent between 1901 and 1903 was on average 21.6 years old (computed using data from: E.N. Tarnovskii, Statisticheskie svedeniia o litsakh, obviniaemykh v prestupleniiakh gosudarstvennykh, in: Zhurnal ministerstva iustitsii (St. Petersburg, 1906), pp. 50–99, here p. 56f. where 7796 files are analyzed.) The local "komitetchiki" were probably older. Perrie found an average of 21.1 years for the terrorists and for the participants of the London conference an average of 30.0. The deviations can be explained by the different interpretations of the distances between the classes given in the sources.

[16] See above p. 115ff. and below p. 318ff., also Perrie, Social Composition, p. 234.

[17] Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 35.

[18] In a survey conducted in 1910–11, Trotskii found an average age among the Bolsheviks of 24 years. See: R.C. Elwood, Trotsky's Questionnaire, in: SR 29 (1970), p. 298.

our attention because they add to our understanding of the political form of all three revolutionary parties an essential characteristic.

9.2. Education and Social Structure

As Table 3a on the following page shows, the biographical data of the Okhrana wanted lists provide little information on schooling and educational level. As a rule, these lists provide only university education. A figure of 16.9 percent for university students is therefore fairly reliable, given that the biographies contained in *Politicheskaia katorga* provide a roughly comparable figure of 10 percent. This reliable source also shows that the mass of PSR members had a middle-level education (40 percent), while about a third of the party members had mastered only the rudimentary skills of reading and writing.[19] As, however, one reaches the level of the local leaders, the proportions shift dramatically – nearly half (48.2 percent) had attended a university. The strong representation of university students in the PSR is clearly noticeable in this figure. Even when one assigns the unknowns partially or completely to the middle-educational level, the proportion of local leaders with only a middle-level education was smaller than the pool claiming a higher education (about 42 percent). Academics (i.e., those who had attended the university – not necessarily university professors or instructors) were dominant in middle and higher party levels; academics represented almost 70 percent of the regional *komitetchiki*, 62.3 percent of the delegates to the first general conference, and 90 percent of the SR central leadership (see Table 3a and Table 3b on the next page).[20] Thus, analogous to the distribution of age groups at the various party levels, a similar picture emerges with respect to education. The close correlation between education level and organizational function suggests a strong hierarchical order in the PSR. The ruling élite the PSR consisted of not only the *stariki* but also the representatives of the intelligentsia.

Separating PSR members according to professional, occupational, and social status supports the above conclusion. Those with qualified professions were substantially more strongly represented at the higher party levels than at the lower. For example, the simple party members and the local PSR leaders included virtually no

[19] Perrie, Social Composition, p. 239. Contradicting these results are the statistics of all political delinquents between 1901 and 1903 whereby 63 percent were placed in the categories "lower-level education" and "able to read and write" ("gramotnye") as well as a further 11.8 percent in the category "Illiterate." See Tarnovskii, Statisticheskie svedeniia, p. 67, printed in Leikina-Svirskaia, Intelligentsiia v Rossii, p. 317.

[20] The categorization in Table 3a is as follows: lower level education – obrazovanie nizshee, sel'skaia nachal'naia shkola; middle level education – obrazovanie srednee, gorodskaia, real'naia, tekhnicheskaia, remeslennaia shkola; higher level education – obrazovanie vysshee, universitet, vysshie zhenskie kursy.

TABLE 3A.: Socialist-Revolutionary Party Members by Education

Education	Rank and File		Local Leaders		Regional Leaders		Party Leadership		Fighting Organization		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher	111	16.9	68	48.2	35	68.6	37	92.5	33	61.1	284	30.2
Secondary	21	3.2	20	14.2	3	5.9		6	11.1	50	5.3	
Primary	8	1.2	11	7.8	2	3.9			8	14.8	29	3.1
Autodidacts	–	–	3	2.1						3	0.3	
no data	516	78.6	39	27.7	11	21.6	3	7.5	7	13.0	576	61.2
total	656	99.9	141	100.0	51	100.0	40	100.0	54	100.0	942	100.1

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P. S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207

TABLE 3B.: Delegates to the First All-Party-Conference of the PSR 1908 by Education

Education	N	%	total %
higher	18	29.5	62.3
without examination	20	32.8	
secondary	10	16.4	23.0
without examination	4	6.6	
primary	9	14.8	14.8
total	61	100.1	100.1

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207

journalists, literaty, or university teachers; by contrast, the latter were more prominent among regional leaders (23.5 percent) and the party leadership (25 percent), as Table 4a on the following page shows. These figures do not include the many revolutionaries who were professional party workers could justifiably be counted among the professions cited above. If these are taken into account, the figure for those party members close to the Central Committee is 60 percent and for the regional party leadership is about 33 percent. About 20 percent of the delegates to the first general conference designated themselves as literaty, and some of those classified only as professional revolutionaries belonged to this category (see Table 4b on page 279). Only members of the new intelligentsia – specialists in a maturing modern industrial society, such as engineers, agronomists, lawyers, and medical doctors – were as strongly represented at the highest levels of party leadership. 17 percent of the local, 19.6 percent of the regional, and 35 percent. Among the simple party members, only about 7 percent came from these groups. The percentage of professions rose at each higher level of the party organization.[21]

The obverse was true those with fewer or no skills. Among the simple party members, the percentage of workers, peasants, traders, and soldiers was about 37 percent. By contrast, only 13.4 percent of the local leaders, 4 percent of the regional leaders, and a mere 2.5 percent of the party leadership came from this category. The professions of the lower middle class and the less qualified intelligentsia comprised 5.9 percent of the regional leaders and a modest 2.5 percent of those close to the Central Committee. Thus these groups were significantly less represented at the highest levels of the party leadership than the lower levels, where they comprised 17 percent of the rank-and-file members and 11.3 percent of the local activists.

At all levels of the organizational hierarchy, the students appear to be represented about equally. Due to their age, however, students apparently could not to work themselves into the Central Committee.

Without doubt, the "new" intelligentsia dominated all of the revolutionary and oppositionist parties in Russia, including the Kadets. This was an indication of their special role as the substitute for the middle class and as an agent for economic and social progress in a backward society. Nevertheless, a comparison with Social Democracy does reveal important differences. In the higher leadership of the RSDRP, there were also revolutionaries with a higher education. According to Lane, 44.3 percent of the Bolshevik and 38.9 percent of the Menshevik "local leaders" had attended an institution of higher education. It should, however, be noted that the proportion of those with higher education in the RSDRP was significantly lower than in comparable PSR groups (68.6 percent of the regional leaders in Table 3a on the facing

[21] In Table 4b the members of the "higher intelligentsia" are probably subsumed in the group of the professional party workers which is proportionally much larger than other groups.

TABLE 4A.: Socialist-Revolutionary Party Members by Professions [a]

Professions	Rank and File		Local Leaders		Regional Leaders		Party Leadership		Fighting Organization		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
prof. Party Workers			5	3.5	5	9.8	14	35.0			24	2.5
Writers, Literats, Professors	11	1.7	5	3.5	12	23.5	10	25.0			38	4.0
Students, Pupils	139	21.2	32	22.7	13	25.5			22	40.7	206	21.9
White Collar Workers	98	14.9	11	7.8	3	5.9	1	2.5	4	7.4	130	13.8
Lower Intelligentsiia	8	1.2	5	3.5								
Higher Intelligentsiia	45	6.9	24	17.0	10	19.6	14	35.0	8	14.8	101	10.7
Teachers	51	7.8	8	5.7					4	7.4	63	6.7
Army Officers	10	1.5			4	7.8			2	3.7	16	1.7
Unskilled Workers	61	9.3	5	3.5	1	2.0	1	2.5	10	18.5		
Skilled Workers,Artisans	122	18.6	14	9.9	1	2.0					215	22.8
Peasants	37	5.6									37	3.9
Soldiers, Sailors	13	2.0									13	1.4
Small Traders	13	2.0									13	1.4
no data	48	7.3	32	22.7	2	3.9			4	7.4	86	9.1
total	656	100.0	141	99.8	51	100.0	40	100.0	54	99.9	942	99.9

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. Avgust 1908. Paris 1908, p. 207

[a] Classification of professions: professional party worker – professional'nyi partiinyi rabotnik; journalists, literaty, professors – literator, publitsist, zhurnalist, professor; university and high school student – student, seminarist, uchashchiisia; employee, lower intelligentsia – kontorshchik, pis'movoditel', sluzhashchii, telegrafist, bukhgal'ter, bibliotekar', fel'dsher etc.; higher intelligentsia – vrach, inzhener, agronom, aptekar'; teacher – uchitel'; officer – ofitser, poruchik, kapitan, stabskapitan; unskilled worker – chernorabochii; skilled worker, handworker – rabochii, slesar', tokar' etc.; soldiers, sailors – soldat, matros; trader – melkii torgovets.

TABLE 4B.: Delegates to the First All-Party-Conference of the PSR 1908 by Profession

Profession	N	%
professional Party Workers	30	49.2
Writers	12	19.7
Doctors	2	3.3
Surgeons	1	1.6
Teachers	1	1.6
Accountants	2	3.3
Librarians	1	1.6
Pre-Study	1	1.6
Students	2	3.3
Workers	5	8.2
no data	4	6.6
total	61	100.0

Source: Protokoly pervoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii P.S.-R. Avgust 1908, p. 207

TABLE 4C.: Socialist-Revolutionary Terrorists by Profession

Professions	N	%
Students (university)	13	4.9
Students (highschool)	9	3.4
"intelligent"	37	13.9
Army Officer	1	0.4
Doctors	1	0.4
Teachers	3	1.1
Sailors	2	0.7
Soldiers	2	0.7
Workers	86	32.3
Peasants	10	3.8
no data	102	38.3
total	266	99.9

Source: Pamiatnaia knizhka sotsialista-revoliutsionera Vyp. II Paris 1914, pp. 8–20

TABLE 4D.: Delegates to the Third Party Congress of the PSR, May 1917

Professions	N	%
Workers	36	17.2
Soldiers	30	14.3
Students	30	14.3
Members of co-operatives	18	8.6
Writers, journalists	18	8.6
Teachers	16	7.7
Physicians	14	6.7
Lawyers	13	6.2
Employees of the zemstvo and cities	13	6.2
Professional revolutionaries	7	3.3
Agronoms	6	2.9
Engineers	4	1.9
Peasants	4	1.9
total	209	99.8

Source: Tretii s"ezd Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, Petrograd 1917, Appendix.

page and 60.3 percent of the participants of the London conference in Table 3b on page 276).[22]

The SD leaders also differed from their SR competitors in professional and occupational status. Among the Bolshevik delegates to the fifth party congress, Lane found that 36.2 percent were artisans and among the Menshevik delegates 31.9 percent. But only 8.2 percent of those present at the PSR's first general conference belonged to this social category. Other professions and trades were also poorly represented. For example, students comprised only 4.8 percent of the Bolshevik and 5.2 percent of the Menshevik delegates compared to 25 percent of the participants at the corresponding PSR conference (see Table 4a on page 278 and Table 4b on the page before). Moreover, the percentage of journalists, literaty, and professors among the SR regional leaders (23.5 percent) was significantly higher than among the Social Democrats (14.3 percent for Bolsheviks and 18.6 percent for Menshevik delegates to the party congress in 1907).[23] On the basis of a long-term comparison of worker representation at the RSDRP's party conferences between 1903 and 1912, it appears that Social Democracy demonstrated a continuous tendency towards proletarianization and rejuvenation. This tendency reached its apogee at the Prague conference in

[22] Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 38 and p. 47.
[23] Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 38.

1912, when 64 per cent of the revolutionaries came from the working class.[24] As far as one can tell, the PSR did not undergo a comparable process before World War I. Only the flood of new members in 1917 initiated a similar, if hesitant and less powerful, process of proletarianization and rejuvenation in the PSR. At the third party congress in May 1917, workers and soldiers – 33 per cent of all delegates – made up the largest single group. Despite the notable differences, we must not overemphasize the social and educational differences between Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries. The available data are not always comparable and do not allow any well-founded conclusions. Without question, the structures of both parties shared a common fundamental characteristic – namely, strong domination of the educated *intelligenty*.

When one attempts to describe more closely the gray mass of SRs, three groups above all can be readily identified (Table 4a on page 278): (1) university and secondary-school students, who made up about 21 percent of rank-and-file party members; (2) employees of small shops and the lower intelligentsia, such as village teachers and medical assistants; (3) workers, artisans, peasants, soldiers, and small traders, who comprised about 38 percent of the party's grassroots. Most of the SRs in *Politicheskaia katorga* practiced these professions and trades. Fully 53 percent of all Socialist Revolutionaries, according to *Politicheskaia katorga*, came from the ranks of workers, artisans, and peasants. Shop employees as well as the lower intelligentsia provided 25 percent of the membership, and students 16.5 percent.[25]

While all the revolutionary parties recruited members primarily from these social groups,[26] there were some peculiarities regarding the segments of Russian society influenced by the PSR and from which it drew its membership. Above all, it was a specific characteristic of the party that the intelligentsia was very strongly represented. In searching for a description of the typical SR, one always finds the same groups (a point noted by critics and the party literature alike): "lower level medical personnel," "village teachers," and "students who ceased their studies," as listed by Spiridovich in a pejorative tone, or teachers, doctors, medical assistants, agronomists, technicians, statisticians, copyists, lawyers, and artists, on whom Breshkovskaia set her hopes.[27] It seems that the representatives of these professions and trades who were less qualified and who lived in the countryside enjoyed special importance within

[24] Elwood, Russian Social Democracy, p. 65.

[25] Perrie, Social Composition, p. 245.

[26] In the statistics compiled at the beginning of the 20th century on all political delinquents, the craftsmen were the largest groups with 33.2 per cent, in second place came the intelligentsia with 19.1 percent. See: Tarnovskii, Statisticheskie svedeniia, p. 74, Leikina-Svirskaia, Intelligentsiia v Rossii, p. 317.

[27] Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 94. E. Breshkovskaia, K sel'skoi intelligentsii, in: RR No. 28 (15 July 1903), pp. 6–7.

the party. The ideal source for recruits for SR agitators at the grassroots was thus this lower intelligentsia.[28]

A further social characteristic of the PSR was the special sympathy it enjoyed among white-collar employees – above all, postal employees, railway workers, and salesmen. The reasons for this preference is difficult to determine. Presumably, white-collar employees preferred the PSR because it raised its banner in the name of all the poor (a social group with which the white-collar employees could more easily identify), whereas Social Democracy primarily represented the interest of industrial workers. It is an open question whether considerations of prestige and status were a factor in making the white-collar employees more skeptical of a party claiming to be exclusively the avant-garde of the proletariat.

Despite the decisive influence of the intelligentsia, it would be unwarranted to accept the polemical label of the SDs and to see the PSR as the party of the "petit-bourgeoisie intelligentsia."[29] There can be no doubt that the PSR also found mass support in the working class and that workers joined its organization. Even in the less industrialized regions of Tsarist Russia, where the neo-populist movement was most extensive, the SRs were mainly active in the cities. Only cities possessed the essential preconditions for a political process, such as an adequate level of education and sufficiently developed communications network.

A convincing confirmation of the support that the PSR enjoyed in the working class came in the 1907 elections to the St. Petersburg workers' curia. The results of this election caused a great stir among the revolutionary parties. Until then, the SDs believed that the proletariat of the capital city, as the avant-garde of the Russian revolution, was firmly on their side. The Social Democrats did win 46.8 percent of the vote and about 115 to 120 electors, but these results were nonetheless a disappointment for the party. Although the SRs won only 36.1 percent of the vote and 60 to 65 electors, they emerged as the real and unquestioned victors. Even Lenin had to admit that Social Democracy had "really suffered a defeat." Not only did the workers vote for more SR candidates than expected but, more importantly, the Populists had won the majority precisely in those large factories that were the "strongholds of the class-conscious, revolutionary part of the proletariat."[30] The detailed analysis by a Menshevik writer proved conclusively that SD votes came primarily from urban neighborhoods where the economic structure consisted of small firms and enterprises. Of each 100 votes for the Social Democrats, 58 votes came from enterprises

[28] S. Nechetnyi /S.N. Sletov/, K voprosu o postanovke raboty v derevne, in: RR No. 35 (1 November 1903), pp. 7–11, here p. 10.

[29] See Lenin, Osnovnoi tezis protiv eserov, in: CW, vol. 7, p. 51.

[30] V.I. Lenin, Vybory po rabochei kurii v Peterburge (1907), in: CW, vol. 14, pp. 341–8, citations p. 344; also Lenin, Bor'ba S.-D. i S.-R. na vyborakh v rabochei kurii v S.-Peterburge (1907), in: CW, vol. 14, pp. 349–353, and CW, vol. 14, pp. 302–306 and 398–405.

with more than 1,000 workers; by contrast, 83 of each 100 votes for the Socialist Revolutionaries came from these larger enterprises.[31] The same picture obtains if the electoral results are viewed in terms of production sector. In the "metalworking factories dedicated to meeting the needs of the army and navy," the PSR, not the RSDRP – contrary to expectations – was the favorite of the workers (51 percent to 26 percent), as shown in Table 5b on page 285. Social Democrats were the victors in the textile factories (63.1 percent compared to 28 percent for the Socialist Revolutionaries) and the rest of the smaller enterprises (67.9 percent for the Social Democrats, 14.3 percent for the Socialist Revolutionaries). The Russian Marxists had to accept a similar but not quite so harsh a lesson in the elections to the workers curia in south Russia, where the neo-populist competitors were victorious above all in the large factories in Briansk.[32] In Baku the SRs reported that "for Baku, as in St. Petersburg, it is characteristic that the 'petit-bourgeoisie' PSR dominates among the workers in the large enterprises, while Social Democracy is preeminent among the workers in the small enterprises."[33]

Thus the PSR's relationship to the working class appears to be complex and cannot be reduced to a simple formula. One the one hand, the reports of SR local committees attested that the largest portion of the proletariat in almost all cities stood solidly on the side of Social Democracy. As a rule, the SDs could easily maintain their supremacy. On the other hand, in the larger cities the SRs succeeded in setting up strongholds even in workers' neighborhoods and conquering areas of SD core support during elections. To understand this apparent contradiction, one must first distinguish between the mobilization and the organization of supporters; those voting for the PSR were by no means active party members. Despite this distinction, it is necessary to find a general explanation for the differing levels of influence of Social Democracy and Neo-Populism in the working class. Lane offers an interesting hypothesis. In his view, the PSR found great resonance above all in cities with a relatively backward industry and a heterogeneous economic structure that combined older and modern industry. He argues further that a labor-intensive technology using unskilled workers drew emigrants from the countryside. As opposed to areas with a homogeneous industrial structure, these peasant newcomers could not be satisfactorily assimilated and, especially in the large factories, formed "islands of peasant norms and values," i.e. enclaves of the agrarian sector. A deficient integration into urban life and

[31] Mikhailov, Vybory vo vtoruiu Dumu v Peterburgskoi rabochei kurii, p. 45.

[32] See V.I. Lenin, Nekotorye dannye o vyborakh po rabochei kurii na iuge Rossii (1907), in: CW, vol. 14, p. 395.

[33] Zakavkazskaia oblast'. Iz doklada upolnomochennogo Ts.K. o rabote v Zakavkazskoi oblasti, in: PI No. 9 (5 May 1907), p. 12.

TABLE 5A.: Votes of the St. Petersburg workers' curia in the elections to the second State duma (1907) by parties and size of enterprise

ENTERPRISES			VOTES													
size	amount	workers	Mensheviks		Bolsheviks		independent		total		S.-R.		non-party members		Cadets and Rightists		total	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
50–100	21	1·571	·446	43.9	·139	13.7	·041	4.0	·626	61.7			·363	35.8	26[a]	2.6	1·015	100.0
100–300	50	9·079	·941	25.1	·844	22.5	·641	17.1	2·426	64.7	·693	18.5	·593	15.8	38[a]	1.0	3·750	100.0
300–500	22	8·219	1·338	45.5	·458	15.6	·157	5.3	1·953	66.3	·674	22.9	·318	10.8			2·945	100.0
500–1000	23	15·852	1·113	31.8	·927	26.5	·035	1.0	2·075	59.3	·932	26.7	·483	13.8	6[a]	0.2	3·496	100.0
>1000	33	80·000	5·723	22.6	2·961	11.7	1·336	5.3	10·020	39.5	10·924	43.1	4·386	17.3	30[b]	0.1	25·360	100.1
															70[a]	0.2		
total	149	11·4721	9·561	26.1	5·329	14.6	2·210	6.0	17·100	46.8	13·223	36.1	6·143	16.8	30[b]	0.1	36·566	99.9

[a] Cadets
[b] Rightists

Source: A. Michailov, Vybory vo vtoruyu Dumu v Peterburgskoi rabochei kurii. In: Otzvuki. Spb. August 1907, p. 51.

TABLE 5B.: Votes of the St. Petersburg workers' curia in the elections to the second State duma (1907) by parties and branches of industry

branches of industry	Mensheviks		Bolsheviks		independent		total		S.-R.		non-party members		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
metal-processing industry for Navy requirements (11 plants)	2·759	21.2	·632	4.8			3·391	26.0	6·653	51.0	2·996	23.0	13·040	100.0
other metal industry (24 plants)	3·222	26.5	2·767	22.7	·210	1.7	6·199	50.9	4·585	37.7	1·385	11.4	12·169	100.0
textile industry (19 plants)	·815	29.7	·629	22.9	·289	10.5	1·733	63.1	·769	28.0	·243	8.9	2·745	100.0
other industry (93 plants)	2·785	32.6	1·301	15.2	1·711	20.1	5·797	67.9	1·216	14.3	1·519	17.8	8·532	100.0
total	9·581	26.2	5·329	14.6	2·210	6.0	17·120	46.8	13·223	36.1	6·143	16.8	36·586[a]	99.7

[a] including 100 Cadets and Rightists

Source: A. Michailov, Vybory vo vtoruyu Dumu v Peterburgskoi rabochei kurii. In: Otzvuki. Spb. August 1907, p. 53.

the maintenance of strong connections to the village worked to the PSR's advantage.[34]

Several statements from the neo-populists support this interpretation. For example, "workers who came into the city in the summer, such as stove fitters, masons, carpenters etc." became the special protégés of the PSR to promote an alliance between those exploited in the agrarian and industrial sectors.[35] The central party paper found that the PSR found mainly the "support of the gray mass" but could win few of the "conscious" and settled workers.[36]

At the same time, one must not overlook several factors that cannot easily fit into Lane's explanation. Table 4a on page 278shows that the workers organized by SRs consisted of two-thirds skilled labor and only one-third unskilled labor (*chernorabochie*) that might be expected to constitute the majority (18.6 percent to 9.3 percent). The same results emerge from a study of the SRs listed in *Politicheskaia katorga*.[37] Furthermore, the numerous reports of the local organizations indicate that as a rule the PSR spoke to skilled workers, craftsmen, mechanics, lathe operators, cabinet makers, printers, tailors, shoemakers, bakers, smiths, hat makers and barbers. In other words, almost all of the skilled trades were sympathetic to Neo-Populism. A final argument against Lane's hypothesis is the substantial popularity that the PSR in Baku, where the petrochemical industry used the most modern western European technology. The PSR's popularity in Baku cannot be described as something based on enclaves of newly arrived peasants.[38]

It is difficult to assess the importance of such objections, for they often rest on individual and random pieces of information. Lane propounds the following general thesis: the resonance in the working class toward both of Russia's great revolutionary parties was approximately proportional to the level of modernization in the respective industry. In other words, unskilled and newly recruited labor tended towards the PSR, while qualified, skilled, and settled workers favored Social Democracy. Although this thesis seems plausible, one must keep two considerations in mind. First, this socio-economic model has explanatory power only for the industrial centers. Nor should one make the mistake of believing that the PSR agitation among the "real" proletariat was somehow ineffectual, for it won its great majority of impressive membership numbers in the cities. By contrast, the party's attempt to establish roots in the peasantry was almost a total failure. Table 4a on page 278 shows that, even among the simple party members at the grassroots, 5.6 percent were

[34] Lane, Roots of Russian Communism, p. 210f and passim.

[35] Nechetnyi /S.N. Sletov/, K voprosu o postanovke raboty v derevne, in: RR No. 35 (1 November 1903), p. 10.

[36] Proshloe i nastoiashchee, in: Biulleten' Tsentral'nogo Komiteta P.S.-R. No. 1 (March 1906), p. 4.

[37] Perrie, Social Composition, p. 242.

[38] For further objections cf. the preface above p. 7.

peasants.[39] One can draw the following conclusion: the party that understood itself to be the fighter for Land and Freedom was an organization limited to the cities. At best, the agrarian population sympathized with the PSR but did not actively participate in party work. The PSR failed to realize the populist dream of overcoming the chasm between city and countryside, between the conscious intelligentsia and "dark" peasant mass.

[39] Also Perrie, Social Composition, p. 245 gives a figure of only 7.7 percent.

CHAPTER 10

The Dilemma of the Socialist Revolutionary Organization

Whatever explanations or conditions that one wishes to note, whether one recalls the generally unplanned character of the 1905 Revolution or highlights the repression of the Russian state, there can be no doubt about the PSR's organizational deficiencies. Indeed, the PSR hardly met the requirements that Chernov himself set for every revolutionary party.[1] Instead of leading the masses, as he demanded, the PSR simply followed the revolutionary flow of the 1905 revolution. Later, as the party tried to assume leadership of the revolutionary movement, it could no longer mobilize the numbers of supporters necessary to realize its extensive objectives. Instead of demonstrating theoretical and tactical homogeneity, the party suffered a split between the left and right wings. The middle that remained could adhere to a common course only with great effort. The party's attempt to adapt to local conditions all too often acquired the character of disfunctional self-interest and egoistic local patriotism.

The SRs were certainly aware of these deficiencies. It was no secret in the party that organization was the neuralgic point of party life and the weakest link in the neo-populist phalanx against autocracy. Even so ardent a foe of the opposition as

[1] See Chapter 6, Note 2.

Argunov concluded in his Central Committee report on party structure at the London conference in 1908 that "organized influence upon the mass of the party was very weak" and their "fusion to a unified whole" did not take place. Chernov seconded Argunov and commented: "We can only make propaganda, not conduct organized work."[2] The most important reasons include the following:

(1) The PSR brought together groups with very different theoretical and tactical concepts. Thus the party was a collection of those political currents that considered themselves to be neo-populist. Combined with the size of the country and Okhrana attacks, such heterogeneity made the construction of a party organization very difficult.

(2) The integrative, "synthetic" character of SR theory favored a diffuse organization. What the PSR regarded as its strength, in the end, proved a serious weakness. The attempt at combining social classes and strata with very different interests – i.e., peasantry, proletariat, and parts of the intelligentsia – contained the risk of a superficial attachment to the PSR.

(3) The spontaneity of SR tactics made the party largely indifferent to the need for good organization. Instead, the party worked mainly to "awaken" the masses and spur them to a "general armed people's revolt."

(4) The PSR failed to separate itself completely from Maximalism. The ensuing defection involved a few local groups of lesser significance. It often happened that Maximalists controlled the local committees and that the Workers' Unions frequently proclaimed maximalist slogans. The left-populist heresy enjoyed a favorable reception at the party's grassroots. Maximalism weakened party discipline and posed a constant danger to the organizational unity of the party. Despite intensive efforts (especially by Chernov) to make distinctions, SR theory and praxis had distinct elements in common with anarchism and Maximalism – a decentralist view and skepticism toward the state.

(5) After the proclamation of the October Manifesto, the PSR began taking careful steps to reform its traditional structure, which had been strictly conspiratorial and élitist, and to introduce democratic principles such as the electoral principle and openness. Although a resumption of autocratic repression soon put an end to these modestly successful reforms, the attempt at opening up the party caused insecurity and provoked severe internal conflict in many committees. The party entered an unstable transition period.

6) From the very beginning of the party's history, there had been a noticeable divide between the center and periphery. Gaps in communications and information separated the Central Committee from the oblast committees, the oblast commit-

[2] Protokoly 1908, p. 160 and p. 96.

tees from the local committees, and finally the *komitetchiki* from their urban and especially agrarian bases. In addition to the relative neglect of organization, three aspects of SR theory and praxis can help explain the chasm between the party's center and periphery: (1) politically, the compulsion to engage in illegal, conspiratorial activity prevented a regular exchange between the party leadership and local groups; (2) geographically, the problems presented by the isolation of many cities and villages and the thin population density should not be underestimated; and (3) socio-economically, the marked divisions separating city and countryside, the dualism between the modern industrialized and the pre-industrial regions that were distant from markets created significant problems.

7) As a rule, the PSR's local groups simply could not exist without the financial and personnel support of the regional or central party leaderships. The local groups were so weak that they could not even fulfill their duty, as mandated by party statute, to support the party apparatus. If the attempts to democratize the party organization failed, it was not only the persecution by state that was responsible for the subsequent hardening of authoritarian-oligarchic structures. Rather, this resulted above all from the lack of initiative and independence at the PSR's grassroots.

8) As with all parties in Russia, the PSR was dependent upon the middle-class and educated classes ("society") for financial support and personal services. Before the revolution and in its first year, the PSR received both kinds of support in substantial amounts. After 1905, however, the party adhered to its radical programmatic and tactical positions, rejected the autocracy's constitutional concessions, continued its tactic of terror, and even used robbery (expropriations) as a means of revolutionary politics – and all that impelled its benefactors in the liberal intelligentsia to stop their support. Henceforth they saw the Kadet policy calling for a bourgeois-constitutional state as closest to their own interests.

(9) The PSR leadership failed in their attempt to secure a regular income by requiring membership dues; donations and expropriations remained the most important sources of money. The irregularity of the latter, however, prevented long term planning of local activities and damaged organizational work.

(10) The PSR, founded later than the RSDRP, did not find a political no-man's-land but, from the very outset, had to contend with a social democratic competitor that, especially in the cities, had become consolidated and deeply rooted. Aside from its areas of core support (northern Ukraine, the middle Volga, and industrial centers like St. Petersburg, Ekaterinoslav, and Baku), the party had only modest success. In general, the SRs could not break the SDs' dominance in the working class, even while making the cities their focus of agitation.

(11) The PSR, like the RSDRP, exhibited a profound tension between the intelligentsia, located mainly in the local leadership collective, and the mass of party

members. In numerous local organizations, it was particularly workers and youth who demanded more participation in party life. They represented "a strong tendency to democratization,"[3] and all this led to serious conflicts.

(12) Of all their failures and deficiencies, the SRs judged the most serious to be the party's failure to establish long-term organizations in the village. Local party leaders complained constantly that the peasant brotherhoods and the volost committees, as far as they could be founded at all, were ephemeral phenomena. They were short-lived creations of traveling agents sent from neighboring urban committees. The complaints by the SRs in Simbirsk offer a good example of the situation faced by the local leadership: "Neither the peasants nor the agitators could find an appropriate activity for the members of the brotherhood ... The agitators left, and the brotherhoods gradually disintegrated; when the agitators returned, there was almost no trace of the brotherhoods, and the entire enterprise had to be started again almost from the very beginning."[4]

In his first program pamphlet, Chernov tried to demonstrate that revolutionary agitation in the countryside was possible and that one must reject categorically the view "that peasants are incapable of any kind of organization".[5] The experience of the PSR in the 1905 revolution forced him to correct that optimism. Poorly developed communication networks, an insufficient level of social organization, a high degree of horizontal segmentation, and other factors characteristic of a traditional agrarian society – all that served to limit the capability of peasants to become politically articulate and to organize itself. With good reason one can reasonably argue that the SRs failed to reach their most important goals not only because of their own mistakes, but also because of the objective conditions that made the realization of these goals extremely difficult.

It is by no means contradictory to the above conclusions to note the undeniable fact that the PSR nevertheless was able to win significant support, especially in the cities, and to become a serious competitor to Social Democracy. Indeed, insufficient unity and the ability to mobilize supporters were two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the flood of new members prevented the tightening of organization, but on the other hand, it stimulated the party's openness. To an extreme degree, the PSR was dependent upon waves of revolutionary spontaneity.[6] So great was the flood of proselytes in 1905 that their flight in 1907 was all the more destructive. By pointing to this characteristic of the neo-populist competition, Lenin's polemical, mean spirited words were on the mark: "Socialist Revolutionary speakers at workers' assemblies are a kind of stormy petrel showing that the morale of the proletariat is rising."[7]

[3] Organizatsionnyi vopros, Ms. from Voronezh, PSR Archive 487.
[4] Kratkii otchet, Response of the Simbirsk committee to an OB survey from February 1907, PSR Archive 623.
[5] Ocherednoi vopros revoliutsionnogo deia, 1st edition, p. 20.
[6] Argunov, looking back, recognized this: Protokoly 1908, p. 161.
[7] V.I. Lenin, Vybory po rabochei kurii v Peterburge, in: CW, vol.14, p. 346.

CHAPTER 11

The Agony of the Socialist Revolutionary Organization (1907–1914)

By the beginning of 1907, at the latest, the PSR's local organizations sensed that the revolution had passed its apogee. The interest of the masses in the revolutionary cause degenerated into a dull apathy. The intelligentsia also limited its engagement and retreated into an ivory tower. Almost everywhere, committees had to limit their activities significantly. At the same time, the Okhrana, which since the "days of freedom" had become a much more vigilant opponent, increased its pressure on the party. In the first half of 1907, the Okhrana raided a PSR oblast conference in Moscow and a large city meeting in St. Petersburg. Arrests by the Tsarist secret police also decimated SR groups in Khar'kov, Nizhnii-Novgorod, and Kursk. This development reached a new stage with the coup d'état on 3 June 1907. A wave of arrests throughout the entire country followed the coup and spared no important PSR committee. Indeed, party centers were a frequent target of repression, and all these attacks decimated the party's organizational network. Breshkovskaia's arrest in the fall of 1907 symbolized, for the Russian public, the gravity of the PSR's plight.[1] At the first general conference in August 1908, the party as a whole became fully aware not only of the Okhrana's thoroughness but also how severely the end of the revolution had affected the PSR. Without exception, delegates confirmed the desolate condition of the party apparatus, reporting the ubiquitous collapse and the

[1] See a detailed list of the destroyed committees in: Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 406.

virtual end of party work. There could be no more doubt that the party was experiencing a "grave crisis." In his Central Committee report, Chernov confirmed that the party's "organization had melted away and dissipated."[2]

The depths of this process of decay, however, had still not been reached. When SR leader claimed to see the light at the end of the tunnel,[3] then it was only because he could not foresee the consequences of an event that a few months later would shatter any last hope—the revelation that Azef, the senior terrorist and party hero, was the greatest "agent provocateur" in the history of the Russian secret police.[4] This disaster shook the PSR to its foundations. Rumors of the self-dissolution of the party speak for themselves.[5] The crisis turned into an all-out catastrophe. Although the majority of SR local organizations held the opinion that Azef's monstrous deed did not in fact endanger the existence of the party or compromise the terrorist tactic,[6] this artificial optimism certainly had no basis in reality. No one could deny that the neo-populist cause had suffered a serious and crippling moral defeat. A report on current conditions prepared for the fifth party council in May 1909 to assess the impact of the *Azefshchina* noted that a "panic" had erupted in northern Russia, and that even "old comrades" lost faith in the party. The revelation of Azef's treason caused such horror in St. Petersburg that the delegate from the capital compared it with the reaction of a "loving mother" to the news of the her daughter's death. Above all, however, this "deeply sad event" had seriously damaged the public image of the party. The interest of the public was so great that pedestrians on the street would exchange the newest revelations.[7] In the Volga region and in south Russia, doubts rose about the expediency and purpose of political terror, although "in principle" it was still an approved method of revolutionary politics. In Ukraine, every organization had reportedly been traumatized by Azef's treason; the Kiev organization was fully demoralized. Finally, the SR exile intellectuals in the foreign organization even believed that this scandal might be the *coup dë grâce* for the PSR. The scandal was seen, correctly as it turned out, "to be linked to the general crisis of the revolution"

[2] Protokoly 1908, p. 56.

[3] Protokoly 1908, p. 65.

[4] See below, Nicolaevsky, Azef.

[5] The Central Committee was forced to issue the humiliating statement that the "liquidation of the party" was not being considered. See: Ts.K. P.S.-R., February 1909, PSR Archive 168, as well as a letter from K.A. Annenkov from 21 January 1909 who asked about the truth of rumors about the abdication of the Central Committee. (PSR Archive 793).

[6] See the numerous resolutions of the local committees in PSR Archive 758/1, 116, 441 as well as in ZT No. 21–22 (Sept. 1909), pp. 26–29, ZT No. 18 (16 May 1909), p. 15, ZT No. 17 (27 April 1909), p. 16 and more.

[7] Stenogr. otchet piatogo zas. piatogo soveta Partii S.-R. from 3 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 11ff., citation p. 15. Also: Peterburgskaia organizatsiia P.S.-R. to the ZTs board of editors, PSR Archive 757, as well as a letter from St. Petersburg to V.K. Agafonov from 27 January 1909, OA XII c (1) f.1 B.

and the party. Only provincial SR groups seemed to be unaffected by the Azef affair; it was reported from Ukraine, for example, that "among the peasants" the catastrophe was "unknown."[8]

The following overview will recount what remained of the PSR's regional activities and inner-Russian organization in the wake of the Azef debâcle.

In 1908, the North Oblast reported that "the work in the province was in a terrible state" and any hope for improvement was illusory. It drew a sharp distinction between two categories of committees: those with a large number of exiles and those essentially comprised of secondary-school pupils. In committees of the former type, work proceeded relatively normally, whereas it had been completely paralyzed in the latter category. The oblast committee noted this situation with astonishment: "How remarkable it is that precisely in those areas with the most people from the intelligentsia that the work is the most poorly organized."[9] Socialist revolutionary agitation in north Russia was expected to remain for a long time as nothing more than "pure paperwork" and to be limited to making contacts and supplying the periphery with literature. Resources were scarce even for this limited scale of work. An oblast conference in July 1908 even failed to elect an oblast committee when local groups refused to make available their few qualified revolutionaries.[10] Only in Arkhangel'sk does there appear to have been a solid and active committee; in 1909, for example, the local committee there was able to publish its own paper. In general, moreover, the north oblast did maintain agitation among the railway workers at a respectable level.[11]

The PSR's organizations in the Central Industrial Region also remained without leadership for a long time. An oblast committee elected toward the end of 1907 fell victim to the Okhrana and the substitute *oblastniki* were so uninformed that they were hardly able to any kind of useful work at all. The party did not renew its central regional authority until 1908, but that failed to bring any noticeable increase in agitation. Larger groups existed only in Orel, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Riazan' (for a short period), and especially in Nizhnii-Novgorod, where by the beginning of 1909 alone Sormovo had registered 400 "paying" members.[12]

The SRs in Ukraine, notorious for their organizational incompetence during the revolution, proved once again during the more difficult Stolypin era that they were

[8] Stenogr. otchet piatogo zasedaniia piatogo soveta. PSR Archive 792, p. 23. Also: A letter from Kiev from 26 March 1909, OA XII c (1) f.1B.

[9] Otchet o rabote severnogo oblastnogo biuro za senti. i okti. 1908, PSR Archive 208.

[10] See Protokoly 1908, p. 23.

[11] Stenogr. otchety 5-go soveta PSR, 1-oe zas. (30 April 1909), PSR Archive 792, p. 5f.

[12] See Oblastnoi s"ezd Tsentral'noi Oblasti P.S.-R., in: ZT No. 9 (January 1908), pp. 15–16; Protokoly 1908, p. 45–46; Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 3-e zas. v 2 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 15ff.

still less able to fulfill the tasks assigned by the party leadership. By the middle of 1908, the PSR's presence in this important region had receded so much that the party could only maintain larger committees in Kiev, Kursk, and Chernigov. The state of peasant agitation was especially poor, for it was the peasants who suffered most from the lack of *intelligenty*. The province of Voronezh proved to be an exception; SRs there even made plans for a revolt. As a rule, however, the party in Ukraine did not have uezd groups, much less a base of support in the village. The degree to which the party's activities had been reduced can be seen by the fact that a total of ten persons directed the four large organizations. Nor could the oblast committee compensate for the lack of qualified personnel. The oblast committee's situation, already difficult, was exacerbated by differences among the committee members. In fact, these internal differences were so severe that one could not even speak of "a leadership in ideas."[13] The following year brought only limited improvement, as the PSR conducted agitation in just four of eight provinces. The reports of those groups that still existed in Khar'kov, Kiev, Voronezh, and Poltava summarized the situation in these terms: "extremely weak organization, extraordinarily limited numbers of party workers, and a complete lack of professional revolutionaries."[14] Even flyers were rarely produced. The party ran the risk of disappearing altogether from public view.

In South Russia, the two large SR committees in Odessa and Nikolaev collapsed as early as 1908—indeed, so completely that, according to the delegate to the fifth party council, not a single party member could be found. The links between the organizations and the individual provinces were severed. Only in Simferopol' and Sevastopol' did a meager level of agitation remain from the once intense levels of the past. The local committee was forced to limit its attention to the railway workers, for the rest of the working class showed absolutely no interest in the PSR. Although the peasants appeared to manifest much more discontent (at least in 1909), the PSR was in no position to conduct agitation in the village for lack of "means and people."[15]

In 1908, the condition of the PSR on middle Volga appeared to be somewhat more favorable. Although arrests had severely damaged the party (the committees in Saratov, Samara, Simbirsk, and Penza being especially hard hit at the end of 1907),[16] they did not paralyze SR activity here as severely as in most other regions. Intensive agitation continued, especially in Tambov and Penza. The SRs in Tsaritsyn, As-

[13] According to Shimanovskii, who traveled the Ukraine as the Central Committee's authorized representative: Protokoly 1908, p. 52.

[14] Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 1-oe zas. from 30 April 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 19.

[15] Stenograf. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 2-oe zas. v. 2 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 1ff.; Protokoly 1908, p. 41; Iuzhnaia oblast', in: ZT No. 19 (July 1909), pp. 18–19.

[16] See S. Povolzh'ia, in: ZT No. 8 (December 1907), pp. 11–12; Kratkii ocherk sostoianiia partiinykh organizatsii v Povolzh'e, in: ZT No. 8, pp. 12–13.

trakhan', and (notwithstanding all the attacks by the Okhrana) Saratov were able to continue operating. Around the middle of 1908, Astrakhan' had eleven groups with about 325 active members. The local committee in Tambov was even able to expand peasant agitation and to organize 31 brotherhoods with about 250–300 members.[17] After the April 1908 arrest of the oblast committee, however, this region lacked central leadership. At the initiative of the Central Committee's plenipotentiary, SRs here convened an oblast conference in July 1908, but it managed to appoint only a single *oblastnik*. Due to the lack of personnel, the oblast conference had to find a temporary solution by giving two members of the Saratov committee non-voting, advisory seats in the regional party center. The following year the SR organizations in the Volga region lost their ability to function. L.M. Armand reported to the fifth party council that SRs were able to sustain a certain level of activity only in the province of Saratov.[18]

In the Urals, local groups maintained lively activity after 3 June 1907. Unfortunately for the Central Committee, however, this activity took a rather disagreeable form. As the revolutionary cause lost momentum, the proclivity toward agrarian terror and expropriation, which had earlier given the party leadership cause for grief, gained momentum. Individual operations by the "fighting brotherhoods" were to replace the mass action that the party could no longer organize. When local activists tried to unify all terror commandos, including the SD commandos, into a "Urals Fighting Union" (spring 1907), the Central Committee decided to send emissaries to the region. They found, as expected, that the "Fighting Union" was in a sorry state. In place of the unified terror commando, the Central Committee representatives tried to renew the SR organization, the first step being the convocation of an oblast council. Six groups, a respectable number, came to this council and elected a new oblast committee. Subsequently, the SRs in Viatka, Perm', Ufa, and Zlatoust were able to maintain an impressive level of propaganda activity.[19] Despite frequent attacks by the Okhrana, the report to the fifth party council in 1909 correctly judged work in the Urals to be "somewhat better" than "in many other places."[20]

In the Caucasus, the PSR suffered only a few defeats. Until World War I, not only the SRs but also the police regarded precisely this region as the vanguard of Neo-Populism. In all of Russia, the Baku committee offered an outstanding example of SR activism. As late as 1908, the local committee counted 1,500 registered members and a circle of sympathizers estimated at 8,000. It based this success on the continuing politicization of the working class. Although the PSR was not the dominant

[17] Protokoly 1908, p. 43ff.
[18] Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 3-e zas. from 2 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 13f.
[19] Protokoly 1908, p. 38f.
[20] Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 3-e zas. from 2 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 3.

force in workers' organizations, especially in the trade unions representing the oil industry and metalworkers, it did play a significant role. This mass support enabled the election of the Baku committee according to democratic principles after 1907. Avksent'ev, who traveled to the Caucasus at the behest of the Central Committee, was so impressed that he singled this area out for special praise at the PSR's London conference. He reported to the delegates that "I was recently in Baku and I felt myself set back two years. What I saw was so dissimilar to the working conditions in other areas in Russia that it seemed that the time of mass movement and freedom ... still existed in Baku."[21] This flowering of the party continued until 1909. Membership did in fact shrink to about 470, and the lack of leaders and propagandists was a problem. But the PSR's organization in the Caucasian metropolis suffered less from these deficiencies than other party organizations, because "the workers themselves ... took charge of party work."[22] Only in the following years did the state security forces succeed in bringing neo-populist activities in the Caucasus and Baku under control. Despite their successes, a police report in 1913 still described the Baku committee as the PSR's "only large organization."[23]

Only the SRs of St. Petersburg were able, at times, to reach the levels of activity achieved by their comrades in Baku. Despite constant arrests and collapse, lack of personnel, and scarce financial resources, the PSR in the capital city was able to maintain some continuity with the highpoints achieved during the 1905 revolution. Repression did indeed ravage local leadership, and internal conflicts did break out when raion committees refused to heed a committee appointed by the Central Committee.[24] However, this conflict only proved the liveliness of the grassroots in the St. Petersburg organization. As late as 1908–1909, the St. Petersburg committee counted about 1,200 members and numerous active raion and factory committees.[25] The collective of propagandists that had to assume the tasks of an incompetent local leadership was especially effective. This collective also made sure that the PSR maintained its influence on the unions and that five members of the union central bureau were PSR members.[26] Unfortunately, the party's relatively good organization in the capital city could not maintain its strength for long. The lack of qualified party workers became quite severe after the Azef shock. By the middle of 1909, the

[21] Protokoly 1908, p. 32ff., citation p. 34.

[22] Bakinskaia organizatsiia, in: ZT No. 17 (27 April 1909), p. 15.

[23] Zakavkaz'e. Oblastnoi s"ezd, in: ZT No. 16 (26 February 1910), pp. 23–26; Misha mashinist, Baku. O partiinoi rabote s poloviny 1910, in: ZT No. 45 (September 1912), pp. 23–24. Kratkaia zapiska o polozhenii Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, sostavlennaia po svedeniiam "Nikolaia" v oktiabre mesiatse 1913 g., OA XVI b (3) f. 4. Also: Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 492.

[24] Polozhenie del v Peterburgskoi organizatsii, September 1908, Zapiska Solomona, chlena St. Pb. K.P.-R., PSR Archive 430.

[25] Protokoly 1908, p. 27.

[26] Polozhenie del v Peterburgskoi organizatsii, PSR Archive 430.

organization relied almost exclusively upon students, and its propaganda had been crippled. Many workers stayed away from the educational circles because, as one worker put it, "the intellectual level was too low" and the "propaganda methods in the 'circles' completely out-dated." Factory and raion committees dissolved themselves. The sailors of the neighboring port cities became completely indifferent to the appeals and propaganda of the party. Only the contacts to shop employees and railroad workers unions remained. According to the report of the St. Petersburg delegate to the fifth party council, of all these groups "not one" was capable of performing any real work.[27]

At the beginning of 1912, Argunov completed an assessment of the condition of the SR organization in Russia. The last such report before the outbreak of World War I, it showed that the party had bases only in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Odessa, Khar'kov, Kiev, Baku, Poltava, Arkhangel'sk, Voronezh, Mogilev, as well in a few smaller cities in the provinces of Volhynia, Orel, Vladimir, St. Petersburg, Podolia, Kuban, Kherson, the Baltics, and Siberia (Omsk, Irkutsk, and Tomsk). However, these groups did not correspond to "the old type of consolidated organization headed by a committee or some other group," but rather normally had the form of a loose circle with "propagandistic objectives." In addition, in many places the groups operated in complete isolation from each other. Judging by the size of the organization and the level of its activity, the PSR sank to the level when it was founded.[28]

This regression in the party's development accompanied the increased importance of the party's Foreign Organization. This had been dissolved in 1905, but was reconstituted in 1907. Once again, the leading SR politicians and a large number of intellectuals only loosely tied to the PSR had to Tsarist Russia. Now all important party matters had to be decided outside of Russia and all the internal party conflicts sparked by the practical politics of the revolutionary years took on a more theoretical character. After 1907, the Foreign Organization replaced the inner-Russian party apparatus in a much more pronounced way than it had in the years before 1905.[29]

[27] Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 1-oe zas. from 30 April 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 8ff., citation p. 8 and p. 10. Further: Peterburg, 25 August 1909, PSR Archive 757; Peterburg, in: ZT Nos. 23–24 (December 1909), pp. 29–30; V. Galin, Peterburg, in: ZT No. 43 (May 1912), pp. 13–14. There is hardly any information on the fate of the rest of the PSR's organizations. They were no longer represented at the London conference and the fifth party council because they had either completely ceased functioning or they had simply lost all contact to the party leadership. (See: Irkutskii Komitet P.S.-R., otchet from 23 September 1908, PSR Archive 171.).

[28] A. Kubov [A.A. Argunov], Golosa iz podpol'ia, in: ZT No. 42 (April 1912), pp. 10–13.

[29] See Parizhskaia konferentsiia zagranichnoi organizatsii s.-r., January 1907, protocols, NC No. 7, No. 2, also in PSR Archive 210 and 234; Zagranichnaia organizatsiia sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. Otchet o vtorom s"ezde Zagranichnoi Organizatsii sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, 30 January 1908, PSR Archive 582, also: OA XVI c f.2; Protokoly tret'ei konferentsii Zagranichnoi Organizatsii P.S.-R., 23 March to 1 April 1909, PSR Archive 220/I; Protokoly chetvertoi konferentsii Zagranichnoi organizatsii P.S.-R., April 1911, PSR Archive 220/III; Otchet o chetvertoi zagranichnoi konferentsii

Although the PSR was undoubtedly suffering from rapid decay, it could not come to a consensus on the causes. At the London conference, Chernov pointed to the "emigration" of the intelligentsia as the most important factor. He therefore condemned the wave of emigration, which had reached such proportions that the crucial intermediate levels in the party could no longer function.[30] As spokesman for the Central Committee, Avksent'ev presented a similar argument to the participants of the fifth party council and noted that the "strata of cement between those above and those below" had been especially weakened.[31] Three years later Argunov found that the SR groups suffered primarily from the "almost complete absence of our developed intelligentsia in the underground."[32] Moreover, his analysis reveals an even more dangerous weakness—viz., that the revolutionary youth, which had always had great sympathy for neo-populist ideas, was now turning its back on the PSR. Based on this observation, Argunov concluded that illegal and conspiratorial work no longer appeared to have any sense or purpose. The intelligentsia had withdrawn from practical revolutionary work soon after the revolution because of resignation and fear of repression. That motive had given way to another: it became increasingly clear that the party must find new ways and forms of political activity. The organizational crisis had become a crisis of political rigidity. This political crisis crippled the PSR during the post-revolutionary ("restoration") period and led to the formation of factions. That faction building was subsequently to have grave consequences for the PSR.

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grupp sodeistviia Partii Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, May 1911, PSR Archive 88 as well as the extraordinarily numerous documents in: PSR Archive 210, 80, 88, 357, 496, 487, 857, 31, 220/I-III, 717, 864, 296 and OA XVIb (3) f. 3B, 7, 191; XVI c f. 2 and passim.

[30] Protokoly 1908, p. 56.

[31] Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 17-oe zas. from 12 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 8; also: N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Ocherki po organizatsionnym voprosam, in: ZT No. 16 (4 March 1909), p. 9.

[32] A. Kubov, Golosa iz podpol'ia, in: ZT No. 42, p. 10. Looking back, Zenzinov described just how miserable the situation was in the countryside in a report concerning his attempts in 1909 to renew the "underground": "You dream long and hard for someone with whom you are connected by a personal relationship and long years of common party work ... There is someone, you think, who would react to your requests, someone with whom you could work together in complete mutual understanding and trust. You get his address and travel one more time somewhere into the countryside and the first conversation convinces you that your hopes were for nought. One points to family responsibilities, the other to his chance to finally pass his exams, the third says he has another opinion with regard to the agrarian question in view of the dissolution of the *obshchina*. And finally there is the cold, visibly mistrustful reception from those who were referred to you by a third party. What one earlier received with ease, quarters for meetings, letter box addresses, places to sleep, is now only to have at the cost of great effort." V. Zenzinov, Iz nedavnego proshlogo, in: Delo Naroda 1917, cited by Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 496.

CHAPTER 12

The Crisis of the PSR: Differences of Opinion over the Lessons of the Revolution and the Formation of Factions

Careful observers of the political scene in Russia were aware that the dissolution of the Second Duma on 3 June 1907 marked the beginning of a new era. Nothing proved the triumph of the autocracy more dramatically than the failure of the revolutionary parties to resist this new arbitrary act of the tsar. Sporadic protest of workers or sailors appeared in only a few places, such as St. Petersburg and port cities on the Black Sea.[1] At first, the PSR refused to accept this new state of affairs. The party charged ahead with a blind militancy: it summoned peasants to begin a partisan war, encouraged local terror commandos to increase their attacks, and even urged soldiers to stage isolated mutinies.[2] Chernov summarized this strategy thus: "The central and local terror and the movement in the army" should drive "the gov-

[1] Materialy tret'ego soveta Partii, PSR Archive 679.

[2] See the resolution of the third party council in: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 65ff. Further: Rezoliutsii, vynesennye na obshch. s"ezde Tavricheskogo Soiuza P.S.-R., PSR archive 546/I; Pis'mo k tovarishcham vmesto doklada Ts.K., 4 June 1907, PSR Archive 303; reserved directives of the OB, in PSR Archive 197.

ernment" to its knees.[3] But these militant slogans were only a short-term answer to the shift in the balance of forces. In July 1907, the third party council had to admit that the "era of the organization of counter-revolutionary forces" had begun.[4] One year later the London General Conference made this unhappy conclusion: "Under the protection of a restored repressive rule, reactionary social forces have gathered around the government. Before the revolutionary events, these social forces were dispersed and did not feel the need to become active in the arena of political struggle."[5]

This conclusion forced the PSR to reconsider its policies and politics. The task of preventing the decay of its organization developed into a new orientation on party tactics and program. This new orientation could not succeed without an evaluation and interpretation of the events of the recent past. If the revolution was the test of socialist revolutionary theory and practice, it was time to take stock of that experience.

12.1. The Immobility of the Party Center

In a programmatic article written toward the end of 1907, Chernov showed the way to adapt neo-populist politics to the new conditions created by the tsar's coup d'état of 3 June 1907.[6] The discussions of the party's first general conference in August 1908 anticipated Chernov's recommendations. The general conference had the express task of addressing the crisis in the party and redefining the party's place in Russian political life.

In fact, Chernov's recommendations and the decisions of the general conference demonstrated more common sense and realism than the third party council. In view of the endless reports of disaster coming from Russia, the SR leadership now argued for a more moderate course. Instead of preaching a misunderstood radicalism, the leadership told the party to plan for the long-term work of reconstruction, insofar as this was at all possible. The first task, as formulated by Chernov, was "to solidify the organization, to close its ranks," and thereby "deepen the work among the masses in the sense of a greater and more systematic development of their socialist consciousness." Not only does this task require a greater number of trained propagandists but also it makes fruitful a new field of work – namely, in those organizations cre-

[3] "Viktorov" in: Materialy tret'ego soveta Partii, PSR Archive 679.

[4] Pamiatn. knizhka 1, p. 67f.

[5] Protokoly 1908, p. 226.

[6] [V.M. Chernov], K perezhivaemomu momentu, in: ZT No. 8 (December 1907), pp. 1–6. Chernov himself noted the authorship of this article in an example of "Znamia Truda" which can be found in the B.I. Nicolaevsky collection. This source helped me decipher the pseudonyms of many authors of articles written during 1907–1912.

ated by the revolution, such as "trade unions, clubs, cooperatives, and educational institutions." He expressly admonished delegates not to fall victim to the arrogance of a narrow-minded ideology of struggle at any price and thereby derogate work in peaceful institutions as non-revolutionary and cultural squabbling.[7]

Another clear expression of the tactical reorientation was the repudiation of attempts at partial insurrection. The PSR had learned the lessons of the disastrous revolts in Sevastopol' and in Voronezh province, and it now returned to the earlier strategy. Because the revolutionary mood of the entire country had fallen to a historic low point, Chernov warned the party that henceforth it should regard such adventures with extreme reserve and skepticism.[8] Avksent'ev even recommended to the conference that it refrain from the usual call for the preparation for mass revolt, a proclamation previously included in every relevant party resolution. This suggestion exceeded the willingness of delegates for concessions and was rejected.[9] But the Central Committee draft resolutions sharpening the prohibition on agrarian and factory terror were passed without any significant resistance. All previous directives had given the party grassroots a loophole to practice the rejected policy of "economic" terror by recognizing the right to self-defense against particularly evil landowners and factory owners. The new policy tried to close this loophole. In view of the great difficulty of "determining in which cases the exceptions were appropriate" and in view of "the danger of interpreting the exceptions too loosely," the conference argued for "extreme reservation." The fourth party council, which was meeting parallel to the general conference, was given the additional task of preparing "organizational guarantees" against misuse of the emergency clause.[10]

Without question, with these measures the PSR made, for the first time, serious efforts to eliminate the tendency of local organizations to reduce revolutionary activity to nothing more than terror and fighting on the barricades. After the coup d'état of 3 June, at the very latest, this tendency had become a dangerous anachronism. Nevertheless, the London conference did not dare to throw overboard received attitudes and modes of acting. Thus it reiterated the old prohibitions, annulled the mistaken decisions of the third party council, and tried again to bring local terror under control. But by no means did it reject the tactic of struggle itself. In fact, the party leadership and delegates even found it necessary to demand again the intensification of political terror. Although Chernov maintained his polemics against mindless fighting, he insisted that the old positions were valid. He emphasized that the party had "not lost its belief in armed revolt" and was not prepared "to reduce this slogan

[7] Protokoly 1908, p. 56ff.; Citation, p. 61; Resolution, p. 227.
[8] Protokoly 1908, p. 62.
[9] Protokoly 1908, p. 133, p. 155, p. 221; Pseudonym "Vronskii".
[10] Protokoly 1908, p. 203ff.; Resolution, p. 230.

to an empty phrase." Consequently, he contradicted Avksent'ev's opinion that "life itself" had corrected the directives of the third party council. Once again, Chernov took his customary compromise position. He pointed out to his Central Committee comrades that "a dogmatic, categorical rejection of militant action would be a great tactical and fundamental mistake ... I favor preparing for the struggle, but I am not for struggle at any price. I advocate a synthesis, which is the soul of our party."[11]

The London conference even radicalized an essential portion of the old strategy. For the first time, it placed murder of the tsar on the agenda. At the founding of the Fighting Organization in 1902, the party had expressly forbidden an attack on the head of state, for fear that the mass of the population would neither understand nor approve such an act.[12] So long as the autocrat enjoyed an almost religious adoration (at least among the peasants) and the myth of Tsar-Batiushka worked to maintain the system, the bullet that killed Nicholas II would also have decimated the ranks of the revolutionary party that fired it. The SRs now believed that the revolution obviated the need for such caution, if only because a survey in late 1907 revealed that the monarch's prestige had sunk to a new low even among the peasants.[13] Thus, after 1906 the Central Committee lifted the taboo on assassinating the tsar and henceforth discussed the matter as a "technical" rather than "political" problem.[14] Nevertheless, the Central Committee did not dare to announce this decision publicly. Indeed, it even distanced itself in a rather shabby manner from preparations for assassination discovered by the Okhrana as the Second Duma was in session. Stolypin played this revelation for all it was worth and made it into a great political scandal. Only after 3 June 1907 did the party press openly advocate an attack on the "center of the centers."[15] As Chernov explained to the delegates in London, only this type of attack could introduce a "new phase in the Russian revolution." Still, the PSR's chief strategist at first urged caution. To Chernov, the Fighting Organization did not appear to be competent to accomplish such a task. He also feared that the PSR could not withstand the ensuing reprisals by the state even if the party did succeed in assassinating the tsar.[16] Although such considerations were all too justified, the militants overcame the moderates. Just as in 1881, as Narodnaia Volia had killed Alexander II, the Populists imagined the murder of the tsar to be the *ultima ratio* to accelerate a stagnating revolutionary movement. A delegate from south Russia

[11] Protokoly 1908, p. 100 and p. 151, citation by Avksent'ev, p. 102.
[12] Chernov, Pered burei, p. 165.
[13] PSR Archive 799.
[14] Pokazaniia M.A. Natansona [in an appearance before the commission of investigation into the Azef Affair] from 19 January 1910, ZP No. 4432 f. 1, p. 4 and p. 16. For a general overview: Nikolajewsky, Asew, p. 187ff.; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 364ff.
[15] K perezhivaemomu momentu, in: ZT No. 8, p. 4.
[16] Protokoly 1908, p. 64, p. 110, p. 148.

pointedly stated that the matter had been decided: "One does not talk about such things, one does them."[17]

The SR leadership and the majority of participants at the London conference more or less held to the traditional, uncompromising "tactics of struggle." Nevertheless, they did show greater openness for change and reform in the question of the party structure. Chernov summarized the situation that was the basis of this strategy: "The party is not experiencing a political crisis ...but there can be no doubt about the organizational crisis."[18] The Central Committee gave Argunov the task of explaining how the party was to overcome the organizational crisis. Looking back, he noted that in 1905 the party was optimistic enough to argue for non-conspiratorial principles and despite great skepticism had adopted a "purely democratic statute."[19] But after two years the party had to admit that it had fallen victim to an illusion and that the attempt at democracy has failed. Only 20 percent of all committees were elected, with the other 80 percent being coopted. The party had to take account of this reality and to recognize that the "epoch of vicious governmental reaction" corresponded to "the epoch of a conspiratorial, strictly centralized organization" of revolutionaries. However, Argunov did not recommend a complete rejection of democratic procedures. Because the PSR still considered itself a mass party, the organizations at the grassroots had to maintain their open character. Still, it was clear (to Argunov at least) that the electoral principle was a "direct and immediate danger" for the committees at the provincial and oblast level. To have a policy meeting the different needs of each level of the party organization, it was best to authorize the party leadership to decide which principle was appropriate at each level and possibly to suspend the electoral principle in favor of co-optation.[20]

Even this proposal for moderate reform met with animated resistance. The delegate from Baku was especially vigorous in his defense of the status quo. He argued that appointing the committees from above must lead to conflicts, since the Central Committee would ordinarily act without consulting the groups involved and would appoint *komitetchiki* who knew nothing about the area where they were to work. This delegate was expressing the fears of the Baku committee about the future of their strong organization, and their fears were grounded in experience. The policy suggested by Argunov already obtained in St. Petersburg and had led to the creation of two rival powers – one democratic and one existing at the pleasure of the party leadership. Other speakers pointed out that the exclusive use of co-optation would hardly prevent police spies from penetrating the party organization. The roots

[17] Protokoly 1908, p. 111.
[18] Protokoly 1908, p. 57.
[19] Protokoly 1908, p. 159ff. ("Golubev"), citation p. 160.
[20] Protokoly 1908, p. 161, p. 162.

of increasing treason lay much deeper, namely in the general moral decay of the party.[21]

Chernov and Volkhovskii mediated between "centralists" and "democrats" by trying to prove that there was no alternative. These attempts at mediation tended to blur the fronts rather than resolve the differences between the parties. Volkhovskii thought that the Central Committee's recommendations would neither limit nor destroy the electoral principle.[22] Volkhovskii was certainly wrong. When Chernov called the excitement a "storm in a teacup" since there was no threat to "real democracy" in the party,[23] he overlooked the fact that the measures proposed by Argunov directly contravened the spirit of the 1908 statute (even if not literally violating the combination of democratic and conspiratorial principles). The opposition, however, did not waver and succeeded in pushing through a final resolution on the organization question that gave the party leadership significantly more modest rights than those adumbrated in the draft of the Central Committee. While confirming permission for the Central Committee to dissolve committees, it ruled that committees appointed from above could operate only until the party was able to organize regular elections. And it completely rejected the recommendation to give the party leadership unlimited authority to dispense fully with the electoral principle.[24]

In general, the discussions on tactics at the London conference reveal two contradictory tendencies. The participants were quite aware that the political scene had changed fundamentally and that the party as an organization hardly existed. They recognized the need to rely more on the legal institutions of the workers and peasant movement if the party wanted to gain ground. Thus the conference greeted these accomplishments of the revolution. It declared its principle readiness to support the activity of the unions as well as producer and consumer cooperatives so long as they were autonomous and had a "working-class" character.[25] Similarly, in the countryside the conference proposed to emphasize those forms of action, such as agrarian strikes, that tend to organize and unify the peasants.[26]

At the same time, the London delegates clung fast to the received militant tactic of revolt. They greed with great applause Chernov's declaration on the continuity in party politics. In his opinion, only the Social Democrats needed to make fun-

[21] Protokoly 1908, p. 163f.
[22] Protokoly 1908, p. 176.
[23] Protokoly 1908, p. 177.
[24] Protokoly 1908, p. 228; the Central Committee's draft resolution, p. 13.
[25] Protokoly 1908, p. 231ff. Also: Partiia S.-R. i kooperativnoe dvizhenie (Pis'mo iz S. Peterburga), in: ZT No. 9 (January 1908), pp. 12–13; K voprosu o kooperativnom dvizhenii, in: Trud No. 11 (March 1907), pp. 8–10; V. [M.] Chernov, Kooperatsiia i sotsializm, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 2 (1910), pp. 265–314.
[26] Protokoly 1908, p. 211ff.

damental adjustments in their politics. At the end of 1905, the Social Democrats – because of their blind optimism – overestimated the forces of the revolution and called for a general strike that was hopeless from the very beginning. Still, the PSR demonstrated a healthy pessimism. SRs recognized that the initial successes of the revolution were won merely "on credit" and due not so much to their own strength as the confusion of state power. Hence there was no chance for a "real victory of the revolution." In Chernov's words: "As far as our party is concerned, we see no reason to make fundamental changes in our tactics. All that we must do is to adapt our tactics to the current moment and to the state of our resources."[27]

It may have been justifiable to point to the wait-and-see attitude of the SR leadership during the stormy fall days of 1905. Nevertheless, in view of the many unsuccessful revolts, the tactical mistake in the Duma question, and the failure of the agitation among the workers, the party leaders showed an astonishing, even dangerous, lack of self-criticism in the lessons they drew from the revolutionary experience. Chernov also erred in judging the moderate appeal of the London conference as a sufficient adaptation to the new situation. In its prescription for "deepening propagandistic and organizational activity" and simultaneously "strengthening terrorist activity," the party essentially left the situation unchanged.[28] The Central Committee still did not believe that it needed to make a thorough revision of party policies and tactics. Despite the many warnings of Russian delegates, the party held fast to an unjustified optimism. Chernov concluded the report of the party leadership with these words: "We are experiencing a crisis, a period of disorganization and decay that has crippled us for some time. But we have recovered from the paralysis and look to the future with hope."[29] It was surely unsatisfactory to try to explain such inertia as mere blindness to reality or artificial optimism. Upon closer inspection, this defect mirrored a basic tactical dilemma of the PSR. For a party almost exclusively dedicated to initiating an immediate general armed revolt, the PSR had no concept of how to act in non-revolutionary times. The party's discussions on tactics tended to mark time, because real adaptation to the changed political and social situation would have entailed a serious threat to the party's identity and received forms of populist action.

12.2. New Opposition: Neo-Maximalists and Liquidators

As early as the end of 1907, a new party faction emerged to oppose the tactical and theoretical conservatism of the leadership. Assembled around Iudelevskii and

[27] Protokoly 1908, p. 98.
[28] Protokoly 1908, p. 100, Resolution, p. 227.
[29] Protokoly 1908, p. 65.

Agafonov in Paris, this new opposition was able to begin publishing its own paper in April 1908, *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'*. The programmatic articles written by Iudelevskii left no doubt that this faction considered itself successor to the practically vanished Maximalists.[30] Their critique contained two wee-known but hardly irrelevant complaints about the PSR's leadership.

First, they accused the Central Committee of blindness and playing down the dimension of the misery afflicting the party. They also openly and directly admitted the defeat of the revolution.[31] Iudelevskii found the main cause of this defeat in the "excessive belief" of all parties in the necessity of a mass rising of the people.[32] He analyzed the PSR's history and concluded that in 1901 the party had primarily accepted "mass revolutionary" and Social Democratic opinions, but not the only correct opinions – namely, those of Narodnaia Volia. It was necessary to recover that heritage – i.e., the "theory and practice of the active participation of the minority taking its fate into its own hands" had to be more strongly developed.[33] Second, *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'* strongly attacked the centralist tendencies of the PSR. Following the stereotype of left-populist and anarchist arguments, the paper suggested stripping the party leadership of its authority for a significant decentralization of the decision-making process.[34] It also wanted to apply decentralization to acts of terror, for the new SR left, just like the old leftists, saw local terror as the best instrument for achieving victory in the revolution. Neither the lack of success in previous attempts at revolt nor the current lack of the revolutionary masses that could have supported such a new terror campaign was to deter the new left. Iudelevskii and his colleagues fell victim to the same blind, suicidal Blanquism as the Maximalists. Given the general apathy of the population in 1908, to demand further radicalization of the old, already militant tactic was like driving the devil out with Beelzebub rather than making a rational contribution to solving the party's crisis.

[30] A. Volin [Ia.L. Iudelevskii], Voprosy revoliutsii, in: Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'. Izd. Gruppy Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov No. 1 (April 1908), pp. 4–8. For the founding of this faction see the Okhrana reports from 26 November 1907, OA XVI b (3) f. 1a and from 11 February 1908, OA XVI b (3) f. 8, as well as: Vnutrennie razdory v Partii S.R., 20 February 1910, OA XVI b (3) f. 4. Also: Parizhskaia Gruppa Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov, PSR Archive 496 and a detailed report on the conditions in the ZO from the beginning of 1908 in PSR Archive 6/III. The closeness of the "Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'" group to the Maximalists certainly did not prevent a hefty controversy between the two over questions of revolutionary strategy. See: Nestroev, Maksimalizm pered sudom V. Chernova, p. 75ff. For a general overview of the following see also: Stepanov, Kritika V.I. Leninym programmy i taktiki.

[31] Iudelevskii said as much at the PSR's London conference ("Livin"): Protokoly 1908, p. 112ff.

[32] Volin, Voprosy revoliutsii, p. 6.

[33] Volin, Voprosy revoliutsii, p. 7; Volin, [Ia. L. Iudelevskii], Politicheskii perevorot i initsiativa men'shinstva, in: Revoliutsionnaia Mysl' No. 2 (June 1908), pp. 4–7; Siverskii [V.K. Agafonov], Karfagen dolzhen byt' razrushen, in: Revoliutsionnaia Mysl' No. 1 (April 1908), pp. 1–4.

[34] O detsentralizatsii, in: Revoliutsionnaia Mysl' No. 4 (February 1909), pp. 1–5.

The conflict with the party leadership took on an uncompromising character and the organizational consequences of this conflict were not long in coming. After supporters of *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'* founded the "Paris Group of the Socialist Revolutionaries" in 1908, those faithful to the Central Committee responded by establishing their own "Paris Assistance Group of the PSR." The final break came in June of 1909 when the *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'* group left the third conference of the Foreign Organization and therefore left the party.[35] Although the new opposition initially appeared to have support in the neo-populist emigrant colony, this new secession did not lead to a serious loss of members for the PSR[36] like that suffered after the departure, because Iudelevskii and his friends had no substantial base of support. Nevertheless, one should not forget that the new left lived on as a serious, half-latent current in the SR camp[37] and that its criticism of centralism was well received by many in the party.

The Azef affair in early 1909 gave a new dimension to the inner-party conflict over the lessons of the revolution. Long-simmering dissatisfaction combined with fresh anger at the possibility of such monstrous treason to produce a demand for open discussion of the causes of current difficulties. In addition to tactical and organizational problems, the party now began to suffer a serious morale crisis. The comrades at the grassroots lost faith in a leadership that permitted Azef to become a close associate of Gershuni, the head of the central terror command, and to rise to one of the most important organizers of party activities in Russia. Even worse, this same negligent leadership ignored for years the justified suspicions about Azef's true loyalty and successfully hindered all attempts to ascertain the truth. This naive trust of the Central Committee in someone already suspected of being a police agent made the scandal even worse. Indeed, the blindness of the Central Committee turned a scandal into a disaster. Thus it became clear that Azef's success as a double-agent was not merely due to a lack of control and that the party must look deeper. Increasingly, Socialist Revolutionaries came to believe that the tactics of terror and conspiracy had to be questioned and that some connection existed between *Azefshchina* and the "general crisis of the revolution."[38] Once again, but this time with greater force, the

[35] Protokoly tret'ei konferentsii Zagr. Org. P.S.-R. (23 March to 1 April 1909), PSR Archive 220/I; Police Report on this conference: OA XVI b (3) f. 6. further: Zaiavlenie C.K. P.S.-R., in: ZT No. 20 (August 1909), p. 19; O 'treniiakh' na konferentsii i ob ukhode Par. Gr. s.-r. (Pis'mo v redaktsiiu), in: IOZK No. 11 (May 1909), pp. 18–26. For the Paris Assistance group of the PSR see the archival material cited in Chapter 11, Note 29.

[36] So [V.M. Chernov], Razval ili konsolidatsiia?, in: ZT Nos 21–22 (September 1909), pp. 1–4.

[37] We can see this continuity till 1917 by looking at the careers of V.K. Agafonov and M.L. Kogan-Bernshtein.

[38] B.N. Lebedev at the fifth party council: Stenogr. otchety piatogo soveta P.S.-R., piatoe zas. from 3 May 1909, PSR Archive 792, p. 23.

party became aware of the need for a radical revision in the PSR's political strategy.

At the pinnacle of the Azef affair in early 1909, another opposition faction emerged on the party's right wing. The time for founding a new faction was favorable, since the compromised Central Committee could not take any effective counter measures and the exiled intellectuals were in disarray. The critics on the right soon found a forum for their views by transforming the previously colorless, mimeographed *Izvestiia oblastnogo zagranichnogo komiteta* (News of the Oblast Foreign Committee) from a mere information medium of the foreign Socialist Revolutionaries into an organ of serious discussion.[39] This development demonstrated that the new current in the party had strong support, especially among the exiled Socialist Revolutionaries, and that a new gulf had now opened between them and the Central Committee.

The right opposition made its debut with an article by Armand. Appearing in March 1909 in the organ of the Foreign Organization, it immediately provoked a strong reaction from the party center. The author of this provocative article dared to question a taboo in SR politics by challenging the renewal of the now destroyed conspiratorial model of the PSR's prerevolutionary organization. It argued that the revolution had changed the entire society that the party simply could not continue as if the tsarist reaction did not exist. The complete passivity of the working class and peasantry, along with the flight of the intelligentsia from the ranks of revolutionary parties, meant that the necessary conditions for illegal activity no longer existed. And the mass of the population increasingly demanded that it be allowed to handle its own affairs. "Independence and collectivism" were the norms toward which revolutionary agitation should be oriented. Only "when the masses in daily struggle" learn "to fight for their interests and strengthen their belief in their own power as a consequence of a solid, good organization" will it be "easy for them to move to widespread revolutionary activity."[40] Communicating these characteristics could only be done by means of the "economic struggle." One first must use the legal possibilities and work in the trade unions, consumer cooperatives, artisan *arteli*, and similar collective institutions.[41]

[39] Izvestiia oblastnogo komiteta zagranichnoi organizatsii, then: Izvestiia oblastnogo zagranichnogo komiteta. Organ diskussionnyi. Paris No. 7 (25 April 1908), No. 15 (April 1911). Continued as: Vestnik zagranichnoi federatsii grupp sodeistviia Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov (cited as: VZFGS). Paris No. 16 (March 1912), No. 17 (June 1912), PSR Archive 88.

[40] L.M. Armand ("Volgina") to N.D. Avksent'ev, 16 July 1909, PSR Archive 799, printed in ZT: No. 26 (February 1910), pp. 4–8.

[41] A-va [L.M. Armand], Chto teper' nuzhno?, in: IOZK No. 10 (March 1909), pp. 11–24; here pp. 19–20. Response: N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Ocherki po organizatsionnym voprosam. In: ZT No. 16 (4 March 1909), pp. 3–5; No. 17 (27 April 1909), pp. 6–10; No. 18 (16 May 1909), pp. 7–10; No. 20 (August 1909), pp. 3–11. Response: L. A-va [L.M. Armand], Prezhde i teper'. Otvet na otvet, in:

Although Armand wanted her article to suggest merely a temporary suspension of conspiratorial activity, Rakitnikov correctly saw it to be a new orientation of principles. He thus had good reason to pay close attention to this "first swallow of a liquidationist current" in SR politics[42] and to present the crisis strategy of the party leadership. His basic thesis was that it was not the masses who left the party, but the party that left the masses. Therefore the party could continue to count on the grassroots. The correct policy for ameliorating the organizational misery was to renew contact with the masses, i.e., "restore the disrupted network of the provincial and oblast committees."[43] Rakitnikov complained about the tendency to allow only legal activities and warned against the "amputation" of revolutionary activity. In case the PSR tried to implement Armand's proposals, he predicted "the final dissolution of the party."[44] Despite the Azef affair, the SR center stubbornly refused to acknowledge that tactical mistakes may have caused the decay of the party apparatus. It therefore continued to adhere to the old conspiratorial model of action and the corresponding organizational structure.

The Great Crisis Conference

The confrontation between the party center and opposition on both wings reached its first zenith in debates at the fifth party council meeting at the end of April 1909. It had convened for the express purpose of liquidating the Azef affair and seeking a thorough new orientation of party affairs. This second crisis conference of the PSR was the decisive forum, where all groups would seek to determine the course of future SR politics. It comes as no surprise that the early planning stages for the conference saw scenes of fierce controversy between the Central Committee and the left-wing faction of exiled Socialist Revolutionaries.

The magnitude of the catastrophe caused by Azef's treason alone should have been grounds for convening a regular party congress. For organizational and financial reasons, however, this was even less feasible in 1909 than a year earlier.[45] Instead, the party had to be satisfied with a party council meeting. To ensure that the most representative assembly possible would be convened, the Central Committee argued that the numbers of those invited should be expanded beyond that required by the party statute and that additional delegates from Russia should attend the meet-

ZT Nos. 21–22 (September 1909), pp. 10–14. Response: N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Otvet na otvet, in: ZT Nos. 21–22 (September 1909), pp. 14–19. For similar tendencies in Social Democracy see: R.G. Suny, Labor and Liquidators: Revolutionaries and the "Reaction" in Baku, May 1908–April 1912, in: SR 34 (1975), pp. 319–340.

[42] N.M., Ocherki po organizatsionnym voprosam. ZT No. 17, p. 8.

[43] N.M., Ocherki, ZT No. 18, p. 9.

[44] N.M., Ocherki, ZT No. 17, p. 8.

[45] See the corresponding announcement of the Central Committee to the local committees: Ts.K. P.S.-R., January 1909, O sozyve Soveta Partii, PSR Archive 168.

ing. Clearly, this suggestion sought to strengthen the Central Committee's position, because experience had shown that the representatives of Russian committees had much greater respect for the central party leadership than the obstreperous exiled intellectuals. For the same reason, the left opposition in the Foreign Organization protested this plan. They argued that there were now almost as many SRs in exile as in Russia and demanded that the representation of Russian and exiled delegates be proportional. A radical "Group of Fourteen" raised the demand (which was by no means ridiculous) that the party council not be convened by the sitting, compromised Central Committee but rather from "known and esteemed sympathizers of the PSR" – that is, respected *stariki* from the populist movement like G.A. Lopatin and V.N. Figner. But the majority of SR exiles found this a dishonorable self-humiliation. In their name, Avksent'ev drafted a "Resolution of the Thirty," which defeated the opposition's attempt to win more influence over the coming conference by giving the Central Committee the right to exercise its full authority until replaced in a regular election.[46]

In accordance with the concept of the party leadership, a preparatory commission went to Russia with the task of organizing the appointment and election of the delegates. The plan was to assemble the properly elected or appointed fifteen delegates from thirteen oblasti and the two capital cities for a meeting outside Russia. The situation in Russia, however, was so bad that even this planned rump congress could not be convened. The northwest, the north Caucasus, and the Don region had neither oblast committees nor local groups; contact could not be made with the Far Eastern Union; in Turkestan the commission could do nothing more than leave a message. Even in the middle Volga and the central industrial region, it was not possible to organize oblast conferences. As a result, elections were held only in north and south Russia, the Urals, Ukraine, Caucasus, Siberia and St.Petersburg. The quorum mandated by party statute was not met, since only five of the nine delegates elected showed up (one delegate with a mandate from the Saratov committee was also present). After waiting in vain for two weeks for the missing delegates to appear, those present decided to constitute themselves as a regular party council, with seven full voting representatives from Russia, one representative from the Foreign Organization, two Central Committee members, and Rubanovich as the PSR's standing representative to the Bureau of the Second International. In addition, four Central Committee representatives had the right to advise the council, and there was only one further ZO member. As presaged by the previous conflicts, the composition of the fifth party council did not afford the critics, at least numerically, a very strong

[46] See a police report on the fifth party council from 1909, OA XVI b (3) f. 7, a resolution of the "levaia gruppa" in the PSR from 18 February 1909, OA XVI b (3) f. 9 as well as an instructive letter from E.E. Lazarev to M.A. Natanson from 20 January 1909, NC No. 7, No. 80/1 Letter 9.

position. The dominance of moderate and conservative forces in the SR leadership was secured.[47]

The conference followed its instructions and focused discussion on the fundamental questions of SR tactics and the building of a party organization. As for agitation in the working class, the need to work with the trade unions became ever clearer. More and more activists in the local groups were finding honorable propaganda in the "circles" to be outdated and proposed to replace the older form of propaganda with a "broader economic organization."[48] In St. Petersburg, it was even suggested that SRs in each location henceforth be organized according to their job or professional status. The old procedure that unified party members in "sub-raion only because they lived in the same neighborhood" was "purely accidental." Torn "from the direct, conscious interests of the average worker," the party's propaganda could not take on a systematic character. To make propaganda more effective, it was necessary to organize at least the lower party cells according to the fundamental unifying principle of the proletariat, i.e., "membership in the same trade or profession." Only at the next higher level in the party organization should groups be constituted along territorial lines.[49]

The expert for working-class questions, B.N. Lebedev, who made the leap into the SR leadership during the Azef crisis, made similar suggestions to participants of the fifth party council. He seems to have combined his "economic" organizational concept with recommendations for a legal trade-union tactic.[50] Lebedev's suggestions provoked opposition from conservative spokesmen in the party leadership. Rakitnikov and Avksent'ev took the lead in accusing Lebedev of greatly overestimating the importance of trade unions. They also charged him with advocating policies that were realistic only in conditions of developed political consciousness and a high degree of mobilization of the proletariat, which at the time certainly was not the case in Russia.[51] At the same time, they reiterated that the party could not afford to pass a resolution on workers' organizations that contained only empty phrases. Despite

[47] See: Piatyi sovet Partii, in: ZT No. 19 (July 1909), pp. 1–3; Izveshchenie o V-m s"ezde Soveta Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. [1909]; Sostav V-go Soveta, PSR Archive 494/III; Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 470.

[48] Iz protokoly ocherednogo khar'kovskogo gubernskogo s"ezda P.S.-R. (June 1908), PSR Archive 623; Protokoly zasedanii oblastn. soveshchaniia Sev.-Zap. oblasti (11 to 13 November 1907), PSR Archive 426.

[49] Instruktsiia tovarishcham o postanovke partiinoi raboty v Peterburge. August 1909, PSR Archive 441.

[50] Lebedev's report is not printed in the protocols of the party council, PSR Archive 792. Therefore his recommendations must be reconstructed from the discussion. Several articles can be helpful in this undertaking. See: A. Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Rabochaia organizatsiia (Zametka propagandista), in: ZT No. 16 (4 March 1909), pp. 5–8; Lebedev, K voprosu ob osnovakh rabochei programmy; Lebedev, Ekonomicheskaia bor'ba v podpol'e, in: ZT No. 18 (16 May 1909), pp. 3–6.

[51] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 22-oe zased., p. 1ff., PSR Archive 792 ("Bol'shov" and "Vronskii").

their many reservations, the majority of delegates nonetheless approved Lebedev's recommendations "in order to enable [local] organizations to participate in the life and the struggle of the working class and to make possible a more concrete socialist activity appropriate to local conditions."[52]

Reformers were also able to use the impulses from lower-level party organizations in discussions on improving the effectiveness of the agitation among the peasantry. For example, a provincial conference in Vologda at the end of 1907 determined that the agrarian population exhibited a growing tendency to unite "on the basis of agricultural needs and interests."[53] Armand, who as the delegate of the Saratov committee took part in the debates of the party council but who hardly was given the opportunity to speak, joined this line of argument and in a letter to the party's central paper suggested that the PSR make "the economic struggle in the village" the primary aim of socialist revolutionary peasant work. She especially recommended building "firm ... bonds," which would have the task (*inter alia*) of negotiating equal leasing terms for all, establishing collective enterprises, and organizing common cultivation of the land. Party agitators should limit their work to assistance and control because, as Armand argued, party workers who did more risked smothering the initiative of the peasantry.[54]

The proponents of orthodox SR tactics energetically rejected proposals that in fact would have fundamentally changed the party's traditional ways of action. At best, leaders like Rakitnikov (for many years the Central Committee's expert on agrarian questions) were ready to accept non-party peasant unions as auxiliaries to the "brotherhoods." It remained an open question whether these new organizations were to serve economic needs or continue working primarily toward political enlightenment. For many members of the party leadership, the mere concept of trying to make good by "extensive work" what could not be achieved by "intensive methods" was going too far. Argunov claimed that the crisis of the peasant agitation could only be solved by creating reliable, i.e. "smaller but truly party loyal" cells in the countryside. In view of peasant apathy, it was "premature" to transfer agitation to organizations outside the party, for the party would not be creating a new, larger organization but at best would be "deceiving itself."[55] Chernov also threw

[52] See Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 20f. A resolution with the same text was approved by the third ZO conference shortly before the fifth party council met. See IOZK No. 11 (May 1909), p. 31 as well as an Okhrana report, OA XVI b (3) f. 6.

[53] Protokoly sobraniia konferentsii Vol. [ogodskoi] gub. [ernskoi] Org. [anizatsii] P.S.-R., PSR Archive 437. The delegate from south Russia reported similar demands at the fifth party council: Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 24-oe zas., p. 7, PSR Archive 792.

[54] Letter from L. Volgina [L.M. Armand] to N.D. Avksent'ev from 16 July 1909, PSR Archive 799. Critique: [N.I. Rakitnikov], K voprosu o bespartiinykh krest'ianskikh organizatsiiakh, in: ZT:' No. 26 (February 1910), pp. 8–12.

[55] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 24-oe zas., PSR Archive 792, p. 5.

his authority behind this position. He noted that it would not do to consolidate the party with an amorphous collection of sympathizers. Only by carefully separating the active members from the faceless masses could the goal of party consolidation be reached.[56]

To judge from the final resolution, the party council delegates succeeded in reconciling both positions. On the one hand, the resolution recommended the establishment of non-party groups in the villages. It charged them not only with conducting political agitation (for example against Stolypin's reform program) but also with pursuing the economic struggle. On the other hand, it emphasized that party cadres were subject to a strict selection procedure to keep them separate and thereby create solid cells at the grassroots.[57] By holding fast to the necessity of a conspiratorial form of action, the conference resolution clearly made no significant change in SR tactics. An emphasis on legal activity in the sense proposed by Armand was nowhere to be found in the resolution. Especially in the agrarian question, this core area of populist politics, the founders of the party successfully fought to secure inherited positions.

There were also differences of opinion between the critics and the supporters of the party center in the discussion over the reform of the PSR's shaken organization. As spokesman for the Central Committee, Avksent'ev defended the existing centralized party organization. He claimed that the party's task was not to change the statute but to increase its effectiveness through better planning. It was necessary, above all, to renew the central direction of the workers and peasant agitation. In addition, the students deserved special attention because in the current situation they represented the best reservoir of needed leadership cadres. Opposed to this line was Agafonov. He argued in the name of the Foreign Organization and the left opposition for a radical reorganization of the party according to the decentralist model. According to Agafonov, the party could only overcome its complete disarray and inactivity at the grassroots by emphasizing the "federal" aspect of the organization. The local groups should have the greatest independence possible and their connection with the party leadership should be limited to "contractual relationships." Of course, by attempting once again to cure the ills of the PSR's with anarchistic prescriptions, Agafonov stood completely alone. His arguments failed to convince a single delegate. The concept of the SR leadership prevailed by a vote of seven to one.[58]

The conference participants were obviously not inclined to a radical renewal of the party. In fact, they were willing to accept only a single reform measure. On Chernov's initiative, the conference decided to divide the Central Committee

[56] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-r., 24-oe zas., PSR Archive 792, p. 10.

[57] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 22f., p. 42f. Similar resolutions in: IOZK No. 11 (May 1909), p. 30.

[58] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 17-oe zas., p. 1ff., citation p. 11f., PSR Archive 792 ("Vronskii", "Siverskii").

and situate it in several locations. Three members of the Central Committee were to function as the "Foreign Delegation of the Central Committee" (*Zagranichnaia Delegatsiia TsK*) and manage the operations of the party center in exile. The rest were to set up headquarters in Russia and work at the grassroots. It now seemed possible to secure "practical control" over local groups and to close the gulf between the foreign center and the internal Russian "periphery."[59]

One of the most important and certainly the most delicate tasks of the fifth party council was to discuss the consequences of the Azef affair for the SR leadership. The council had to decide whether and how to hold the Central Committee accountable for this disaster. This question sparked very serious conflicts and demonstrated most clearly the differences between conservatives and reformers. All conference participants agreed that the monstrous double-agent game by the senior terrorist must have consequences for all those who led the PSR during this period and who were often close friends to the traitor. But there were several different motives behind recommendations that Central Committee resign. The majority accused the party leadership of serious failures, and Armand summarized these failures in a highly polemical manner: (1) the Central Committee was neither attentive nor clever; (2) it was irresponsible for failing to make a vigorous investigation of indications that a traitor was indeed in their midst; and, (3) its indecision had allowed Azef to escape.[60] A minority of judges said that the Central Committee was free from any guilt. Out of consideration for public opinion and the PSR's prestige, they proposed to relieve the Central Committee of its duties. Although the majority declined to call for a formal vote of no confidence (to avoid further damage to the reputations of respected and popular party politicians), both positions proved irreconcilable. As a result, two separate resolutions announced the resignation of the old leadership. The critics (four delegates) insisted on the formulation that the Central Committee had not acted "with the necessary decisiveness as required by the situation"; supporters of the leadership (three delegates) expressly confirmed that it had acted correctly and that it was relieved of its duties "only because of tactical and purely formal considerations."[61] Although the opposition won a close victory, it was unquestionably a triumph for the conservatives.

[59] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 18-oe zas., p. 3ff., PSR Archive 792; Resolution: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 18. An indication of the degree to which the contact between the Central Committee and the local organizations was lost can be seen in the results of a survey organized by the party leadership. Out of a total of 40,000 questionnaires only 63 were returned, a result that Chernov described as a scandal. (Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta PSR, 8-oe zas., p. 22, PSR Archive 792.

[60] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 7-oe zas., p. 11, Archive PSR 792

[61] Izveshchenie o V-m s"ezde Soveta Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, p. 6. For the larger history: Stenogr. otch. piatogo P.S.-R., 7-oe zas., p. 1ff., 30-oe zas., p. 3ff., PSR Archive 792.

The resignation of the Central Committee soon proved a paper decision. To be sure, the newly-elected Central Committee certainly included very capable revolutionaries, among them Zenzinov, Kovarskii, Shimanovskii, Freifel'd, Pankratov, and B. Lebedev.[62] Nevertheless, the direction of the party was still in the hands of the prominent *stariki*, essentially for two reasons. First, the party felt that it could not do without the experience and the abilities of the older Central Committee members. The fifth party council even formally confirmed Chernov, Rakitnikov, and Avksent'ev as editors of the central party paper. Unofficially, Argunov, Natanson, and Sletov concentrated organizational functions in their hands. Second, the new Central Committee did not last long. Following the new policy of the fifth party council, five of the new members went to Russia to ensure that the "glimmering fire of the party not be extinguished"[63] and were quickly arrested by the Okhrana.[64] All that remained was the Foreign Delegation directed by Feit and Fundaminskii.[65] This rump executive could in no way assume the functions of a party central.

The fifth party council also passed a resolution on the organization question, expressly reaffirming its belief that "absolutely no changes" in the statute and the old party organization were necessary.[66] At the same time, it formulated the basic attitude underlying its recommendations on the question of agitation among workers and peasants as well as its personnel decisions. The modest correction of SR tactics appeared to many in the party, especially the Russian underground workers, as unsatisfactory. The party's second crisis conference proved just as incapable of accomplishing its mission as had the first. Despite the shock of the Azef affair, for a second time the party failed to make a necessary, thorough, and comprehensive reform of party work. Although gravely weakened, the old party leadership could not only maintain its position of power but also impose its tactical-programmatic line. Yet this victory by no means healed the wounds caused by a failed revolution and the treason of the PSR's chief terrorist. Indeed, the majority of council members ignored the fact that they very imperfectly reflected opinion of the party as a whole and that

[62] According to Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 487, two less known socialist revolutionaries, B.G. Nesterovskii and A.A. Khovrin, also belonged to the new Central Committee.

[63] V.M. Zenzinov, Iz nedavnego proshlogo, in: Delo Naroda. 1917, cited after Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 491.

[64] See Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., p. 490f.

[65] For the mission of these delegates see: Ob upolnomochennykh TsK zagranitsei, NC No. 125, No. 14. The senior PSR leadership was grouped around the ZD. The personnel of the ZD hardly changed. The only new members were V.N. Richter, S.M. Bleklov, the former member of the socialist revolutionary committee from Odessa V.I. Sukhomlin, the journalist V.V. Lunkevich and especially V.J. Fabrikant ("Dal'nyi") who previously belonged to the "Sotsialisticheskaia evreiskaia Rabochaia Partiia" (Socialist Jewish Workers Party, SERP). See various documents in OA XVI b (3) f. 3 B and 7, XVI b (4) as well as NC No. 7, No. 31 and PSR Archive 87 b.

[66] Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 16.

they hardly paid heed to inner-party criticism. As a result, the majority probably lost its final opportunity to save the unity of the party. From this point onward, the chasm between the opposition and the party center steadily widened.

12.3. Party Split: Legal Socialist Revolutionaries

Above all, the party's right wing gained in supporters and definition, and critical articles from this faction became ever more frequent in the party press. By hardening the fronts drawn in the controversy between Rakitnikov and Armand and the discussions at the fifth party council, these articles marked the stages on building of a consciousness of the opposition as a group and signaled the genesis of the first original right wing faction in the PSR.

12.3.1. New Forms of Social Action and the Crisis of the Socialist Revolutionaries' Revolutionary Agitation

At the beginning of 1910, the polemic attack by N.N. Sokolov on the dogmatic rigidity of the Central Committee evoked great excitement.[67] Sokolov was an experienced underground fighter who had led the PSR committee in Kiev in 1905. He complained that the party leaders simply refused to recognize that some agitators were leaving the revolutionary cause "because in their efforts to find their way in the new conditions, they began to doubt the old methods and the purpose of the work." Sokolov also felt that a change in tactics was necessary and recommended a stronger engagement in trade unions and in cultural and educational institutions. For Sokolov, apparently, a precondition for change was purification of the party "from all kinds of rubbish: from attitudes of generals, bureaucracy, nepotism, the divide between those higher and those lower in the party Organization, chasm between the periphery and the center, etc".[68]

Another article from Russia published three months later proved much more effective. Not only did it present a more nuances argument but came from the pen of a Central Committee member, Zenzinov. Like Armand, he left no doubt that it was an "illusion now to dream of the renewal of the party." The revolutionary had no choice but to adapt to the changed social reality and to use the new institutions – viz., "to perform molecular destructive work in the agrarian and economic cooperatives,"

[67] See Shklovskii, Nakanune 1905 g., p. 127.

[68] Staryi rabotnik [N.N. Sokolov], Nabolevshie voprosy (Pis'mo k tovarishcham), in: ZT No. 25 (January 1910), pp. 10–13, here p. 10. Rakitnikov's response limited itself to a protest against the rudeness of Sokolovs article: [N.I. Rakitnikov], Neobkhodimye ob"iasnenie, in: ZT No. 25 (January 1910), pp. 13–17.

in daily life in the factories, and among the workers.[69] Representing Rakitnikov, Avksent'ev entered the fray to oppose Zenzinov and to defend the PSR's old belief. He objected that legal tactics can only be realized by a "political agent or an organized party." Renouncing the previous conception led in his opinion directly to the liquidation of the revolutionary cause, that is, to *kul'turnichestvo*.[70]

The following year the question whether the PSR should participate in the coming elections to the Fourth Duma became the catalyst for a transition from theoretical discussion to organizational fission. Avksent'ev, who a short time earlier had compared the reformers to deserters and rabble-rousers, was now the leader in a fight to use the parliament as a political tribune.[71] In the name of orthodox SRs, Rakitnikov opposed Avksent'ev and argued that, just as in 1907, this new Duma had no real authority and was nothing more than a deception of the people.[72] Given the refusal of party leaders to compromise, the opponents of boycott felt driven to put their alternative tactical position into a written platform. On 4 November 1911, Avksent'ev and Fundaminskii presented this platform to the Central Committee's Foreign Delegation.[73] A short time later the dissidents, joined by Sletov, B. Lebedev, and Bilit, began preparing to publish their own paper *Pochin* ("Beginning"). As the title indicates, the dissidents made a new "begin-

[69] Al. Kliuev [V.M. Zenzinov], O partiinykh zadachakh vremeni, in: ZT No. 27 (April 1910), pp. 9–14, here p. 12f.

[70] N.D. [N.D. Avksent'ev], Zadachi partii v sviazi s perezhivaemym momentom, in: ZT No. 27 (April 1910), pp. 14–21, here p. 20. B.N. Lebedev supported Zenzinov in this discussion by pointing out that, whether or not one approved it, Zenzinov did describe the reality in Russia correctly. See Boris Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Nechto ot dogmy, in: ZT No. 30 (August 1910), pp. 9–12. Response: N.D. [Avksent'ev], Otvet t. Voronovu, in: ZT No. 30, pp. 12–16. Response to Avksent'ev: Boris Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Kak vosstanovit' partiinuiu rabotu, in: IOZK No. 12 (November 1910), pp. 4–12. See also A Pospelov [S. Postnikov] Po povodu statei tt. Starogo rabotnika i Al. Kliueva, in: ZT No. 32 (November 1910), pp. 11–15.

[71] N.D. [Avksent'ev], Boikot ili uchastie v vyborakh, in: ZT No. 35 (April 1911), pp. 7–9.

[72] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], 'Vybirat'-li v Dumu?, in: ZT No. 36 (June 1911), pp. 14–18; [Rakitnikov?] Partiia i 'legal'nye vozmozhnosti'. In. ZT No. 36 (June 1911), pp. 1–3. See also: Preniia na IV-oi Zagranichnoi konferentsii grupp sodeistviia P.S.-R. po voprosu ob uchastii Partii v vyborakh v IV-iu Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu; in: VZFGS No. 16 (March 1912), pp. 15–19; Ant. Savin [A.B. Shimanovskii], V toi oblasti, gde tsentra net, in: VZFGS No. 17 (June 1912), pp. 1–7. A survey of party members (with a total of 29 [sic!] responses) did not offer much help in deciding the question at hand. The majority (16) spoke out against participating in the Duma but they did not believe that the party was in a position to organize an active boycott. See: O vyborakh v chetvertuiu dumu, in: ZT No. 41 (March 1912), pp. 1–2; Rezul'taty v anketu ob otnoshenii k IV-oi Gosudarstvennoi Dume, in: ZT No. 41 (March 1912), pp. 7–10. The participants of the fourth ZO conference spoke out against participating in the Duma. See: Otchet o IV-oi zagranichnoi konferentsii grupp sodeistviia P.S.-R. May 1911 g., p. 23f.; Also: ZT No. 35 (April 1911), p. 23f.

[73] See Protokoly zasedanii Zagranichnoi Delegatsii Ts.K. P.S.-R. (24 February to 20 December 1911) PSR Archive 30. The platform is largely identical with the introductory program article in: Pochin. Izd. Gruppy Sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. Pod red. N. Avksent'eva, I. Bunakova [I.I. Fundaminskii], B. Voronova [B.N. Lebedev], I.S. Nechetnogo [S.N. Sletov], Paris No. 1 (June 1912), pp. 1–2.

ning." Still, they were only drawing conclusions from discussion that had lasted three years.

The core assumption of the *Pochintsy* was that the events of the 1905–1906 revolution had inaugurated a new phase in Russia's social and political development. What was special about the post-revolutionary period was "the striving of working people for social self-determination ... and organization."[74] That was a result of "the general growth of cultural and social needs," a new, deeply-rooted "class consciousness of the lower classes in the city and countryside," the creation of "cells of public opinion of the working people" (*trudovaia obshchestvennost'*), and "the general differentiation of political life." The spontaneity of revolutionary and social movements gave way to increasing organization. The PSR's tactics must adapt to this tendency and therefore promote activities such as "participation in meetings of social organizations, organizing campaigns relating to questions that directly affect the interests of the working class (struggle for the right to build coalitions, struggle against the increase in the cost of living, protest against the acts of the government in starving villages, etc.), arranging meetings and demonstrations, widespread agitation in the special workers' papers and the press as a whole, and finally using the State Duma" as a political tribune.[75]

Avksent'ev's theoretical arguments were buttressed by Sletov in perhaps the most interesting article in the new paper. His report of an illegal journey through Russia that he undertook toward the end of 1911 sharply attacked the conventional models of thinking and forms of action in SR politics. He offered solid evidence of the serious effects of the new "social self-determination," above all the disappearance of the "underground." Sletov wrote that an "illegal stratum," present since the end of the 1890s, no longer existed. Therefore, the possibility of conspiratorial activity, which had been the basis of PSR success up to this point, had disappeared. Whoever wants to influence society must now "become a useful, forceful person for the population. The propagandist of general truths is no longer necessary." What is needed is "the organizer of the future victory; one who, firmly bound to the needs and interests of the grass roots, can organize not only the continuous struggle for these interests but also the existing creative independent activity of the society." Sletov also destroyed the typical picture of the Socialist Revolutionary: "Today the revolutionary is no longer that mysterious being illuminated by the glow of heroism, no longer that mythic 'student', whose mere appearance in the village practically meant that the enemy was already defeated."[76]

[74] Protokoly zasedanii, PSR Archive 30.

[75] Pochin, No. 1, p. 1f.

[76] St. Nechetnyi [S.N. Sletov], Na rodine (Zametki i vpechatleniia podpol'nogo cheloveka), in: Pochin, No. 1, pp. 15–18, citation, p. 15f. Sletovs mission in Russia was the reorganization of the Central

Officially, the editorial board of *Znamia Truda* accepted the publication of *Pochin* with "great satisfaction" and saw it as proof of the freedom of opinion within party.[77] This apparent agreement did not of course prevent sharp controversy. Rakitnikov tried to play down the differences with the right-wing dissidents. He simply declared the new paper unnecessary, claiming that since 1905 the PSR had "thoroughly renewed" its strategy, had in particular stopped preparing for a revolt, and had rejected a policy of local terror. What remained were tactical differences of opinion that could have fit in the columns of the central party paper.[78] In his polemical response, Sletov tried to restore the discussion to its proper place – viz., as a discussion over a new orientation of principles.[79] Sletov had the support of Avksent'ev, who felt compelled once again to justify the new "methods of working." In arguing against Rakitnikov, Avksent'ev claimed that the party leadership had not recognized that the old forms of revolutionary action (e.g., the distribution of flyers and organization of circles) was inappropriate to changed conditions, since "one can not integrate the masses into circles."[80] The mediation of I.I. Rakitnikov could not prevent a hardening of the fronts. Her attempt to define the PSR as a synthetic party (in a tried-and-true Chernov manner), i.e., as a party that unified legal and illegal activity, was unsuccessful because the clarification of rival positions had advanced too far for such purely verbal compromises.[81] A new schism in the neo-populist movement seemed unavoidable. This fear had already come to the fore when the Central Committee's Foreign Delegation first discussed the *Pochin* group. Although the new opposition expressly understood itself as one current in the party and although the Foreign Delegation voted to retain Avksent'ev on the editorial board of the *Znamia Truda*, it was clear to all that the party faced the threat of a "factional crisis".[82]

The *Pochintsy* did not occupy the entire right wing of the PSR. Assembled around Shimanovskii (who later became a Menshevik) was another right-wing opposition group. The public forum of this group was *Izvestiia Zagranichnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta*. More radical than Avksent'ev and his friends, the attacks of the Shi-

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Committee and the transportation of literature but he was unsuccessful and had to leave the country. See: Kratkaia zapiska o polozhenii Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, sostavlennaia po svedeniiam "Nikolaia" v oktiabre mesiatse 1913 g., OA XVI b (3) f. 4.

[77] Otkliki, in: ZT No. 44 (June 1912), pp. 9–10.

[78] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Novoe techenie sotsial'no-revoliutsionnoi mysli, in: ZT No. 45 (September 1912), pp. 1–6.

[79] St. Nechetnyi [S.N. Sletov], in: ZT No. 49 (February 1913), pp. 14–15. Reply: N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Otvet tov. S.Nechetnomu, in: ZT No. 49 (February 1913), pp. 15–16.

[80] N. [D.] Avksent'ev, Nashi raznoglasiia, in: ZT No. 51 (July 1913), pp. 1–12., here p. 11f. Response: N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], V chem zhe raznoglasiia?, in: ZT No. 52 (November 1913), pp. 4–7.

[81] In. Ritina [I.I. Rakitnikova], Techeniia s.-r. mysli, in: ZT No. 50 (April 1913), pp. 5–9, here p. 8.

[82] Rakitnikov and Argunov were the most skeptical. See: Protokoly Zagranichnoi Delegatsii, meeting of 4 November 1911, PSR Archive 30.

manovskii group on the party leadership were so polemical that a Foreign Organization conference felt compelled to bring its own paper back into line.[83] But the extreme right was not only more aggressive in its formulations but also aimed its complaints at the heart of PSR politics. While the more moderate rightists (with whom the Shimanovskii group apparently had no contact) refrained from criticizing the axioms of the SR program, Shimanovskii knew no such restraint. He interpreted the flowering of "social self-determination" in a revolutionary-theoretical manner and judged it a signal for the beginning of the bourgeois-democratic period in Russia's socio-economic and political development. He strongly objected to Rakitnikov's interpretation of the crisis in revolutionary parties and pointed out that "it is not a matter of 'exhaustion' or 'disappointment' but rather ... the intelligentsia is becoming more bourgeois and is generally dispersed across the entire front of Russian parties and political groups."[84] The analysis of the extreme right laid bare the explosive power behind the conflict over the renewal of the party organization and work. By admitting the existence of capitalist industrialization, the PSR program had already surrendered the assumption of early Populism that Russia could leap over the capitalist stage. Now the party wanted to try to hold back the advance of capitalism. Shimanovskii went one decisive step further by claiming quite forcefully that even this modest demand had now become obsolete. Thus the party was confronted with the new problem of trying to define the coming revolution. It was no longer possible to claim that an immediate socialization of the land would reduce the bourgeois stage of the process to a socialist order a short, transitional period. The extreme right-wing had to regard the coming revolt as a bourgeois revolution and as the beginning of a long-term "bourgeois" epoch on the west European model. For the group around Shimanovskii, the critical revision of socialist revolutionary tactics turned into a rejection of the populist heritage. Shimanovskii and his group essentially appealed to the PSR to dissolve itself and, at the same time, argued for legal politics in the service of bourgeois democracy. The *Pochintsy* themselves would not have gone so far but their arguments in fact pointed in the same direction as the Shimanovskii group. The right as a whole, therefore, took a position before the outbreak of World War I that made it possible for them in 1917 to enter a coalition with the Mensheviks and Kadets.

[83] O konferentsii zagranichnykh organizatsii sodeistviia P.S.-R, in: ZT No. 35 (April 1911), pp. 23–24.

[84] Ant. Savin [A.B. Shimanovskii], Bol'nye voprosy, in: IOZK No. 12 (November 1910), pp. 1–4; No. 13 (January 1911), pp. 3–7; No. 14 (February 1911), pp. 1–5; No. 15 (April 1911), pp. 1–9, here No. 14, p. 2.

12.3.2. Individual Terror: Anachronistic Politics

No instrument of SR tactics contradicted the legalist concept of the right opposition more overtly than political terror. As more and more SRs became convinced that revolutionary strategy, at least temporarily, must be limited to those forms of action permitted by the autocracy, the calculated use of violence came under increasing intra-party criticism. Azef's treason helped the reformers, since it forced the party to discuss the sense and purpose of assassinations under changed social and political conditions and to consider whether this tactic could still accomplish its prescribed functions.

In the past, the party certainly had good cause to reconsider frequently the appropriateness of terrorist acts. Because terror was to be a response to the "cruelty" of the "government" and one form of the struggle for a free social order (according to the SR conception of this tactic), the criterion for its legitimacy was the action of the state and the success of the SR forces. Every time terror forced concessions from the enemy was a new occasion for reexamining the tactic. One good reason for this reexamination was the need to evaluate the reaction of public opinion and masses.[85] After such reexaminations, the PSR leadership decided three times to suspend violent attacks: in October 1905, when the Fighting Organization was changed into a committee for the preparation of the armed revolt, as well as in May 1906 and February 1907, when the party did not want to endanger the work of the first and second Dumas with provocative acts of violence.

The objections raised by the right opposition against terror since 1909 and first put forward at the fifth party council were of a fundamentally different kind. To be sure, as part of a general revision of party tactics the fifth party council too at first only debated whether, in view of the Azef affair, preparations for further attacks should be temporarily suspended. But all the speakers who voted for a temporary suspension explained that their arguments were made independent from the Azef catastrophe and had deeper roots.[86] The Azef affair was the immediate incentive for criticism but did not justify it. Chernov correctly concluded that for the

[85] In a conflict with a supporter of the "Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'" group Sletov interpreted the party decisions on the fundamentals of terrorist tactics in this way. The Neomaximalists, on the other hand, held to the position that acts of terror must be committed as an "unbroken chain" as long as the autocracy remains. They derived their position from the formulation of the first party congress that terror should be justified until the "complete establishment of real freedom." (Protokoly 1906, p. 314). See: Ign. N. [S.N. Sletov], Dostovernyi svidetel', in: ZT: No. 20 (August 1909), pp. 11–14; Ign. N. [Sletov], Otvet na pis'mo Bashkirova, in: ZT No. 26 (February 1910), pp. 14–16.

[86] Dokumenty po istorii Partii S.-R.: Vopros o terrore na V sovete Partii, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 2 (1910), pp. 1–35, here p. 3 and p. 17. The original, which is slightly different, is in: Protokoly piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 14–16. Meeting 10 to 11 May PSR Archive 792.

first time the purpose of terror as a method of struggle was the subject of discussion.[87]

The opinion of the preparatory committee was divided: half of its members voted for a suspension of terror, the other half voted against. Supporters of a temporary suspension were blind to the real question at hand and completely oriented toward immediate tactical considerations. Their main argument was that before 1905 terror had tremendous success because it was carried by the growing revolutionary unrest, the mobilization of the masses, and the "general receptiveness of the population." This success blinded the tsarist state and misled it to overestimate greatly the strength of revolutionary forces. No one knew who "led the campaign" and therefore "the public was full of hope, the government full of uncertainty and fear."[88] The terrorist tactic won its victories in the "romantic period" of the revolution "on credit" and profited from the chiliastic hope of these years "that the hand of some liberator would appear and lead in some direction." This diffuse, elementary turmoil, upon which the political effects of terror necessarily rested, came to a halt with the end of the revolution and gave way to general apathy. At the same time the state had recovered from its weakness and extinguished the last spark of rebellion. None other than the high-school chemistry professor Bilit, who as a technical expert in terror was expressly invited to take part in the discussions of the party council, denied that acts of violence against representatives of the autocracy would achieve those three effects that Gershuni and Chernov in 1902 had ascribed to this tactic. Acceptance of these three results had justified the use of terror as an official tactic of the PSR. Bilit maintained that political terror could no longer "destabilize" the autocracy, "mobilize" the masses, and "organize" the revolutionary forces.[89]

Rubanovich offered a much deeper argument. He did not ask if terror had a purpose but whether it was still legitimate. He recalled that terror as revenge on the tsarist state and carried out in the name of the oppressed was justified only by the inability of the oppressed to defend themselves. Because of the revolution, this basic assumption was no longer valid: "The people, or more precisely the exploited working class, has stepped onto the arena of political action and struggle – not in the name of a feeling of justice violated, but in the name of their economic and political interests." A duel, as presented by political terror, has become anachronistic. Rubanovich then posed the provocative question: "Does it not appear to the comrades that under the circumstances individual terrorist acts in the future are somehow rather pathetic, since they correspond neither to the strength of the enemy nor to the mood of the

[87] Dokumenty, p. 32.

[88] Dokumenty, p. 3f.; confirmed by Spiridovich, Partiia S.-R., who noted, that the state was surprised by the PSR's early attacks (p. 126).

[89] Dokumenty, p. 17f.

masses – not to mention their complete political pointlessness."[90] Other participants in the discussion accepted this objection, but gave it a more obvious Marxist coloring. Lebedev, who later became a *Pochinets*, recalled that the PSR had rejected economic terror with the argument that one can not fight against a class with assassinations. Now that the bourgeois class character has been unmistakably revealed since the end of the revolution, the same argument can be applied to political terror.[91] Two months later, Bilit formulated this consideration even more clearly in a letter to the board of editors of *Znamia Truda*:

"Today it is obvious that autocracy is by no means alone, that its condition has stabilized, that those classes interested in its existence are closing ranks to give strong support, and that these classes are not prepared to surrender their hold on autocracy voluntarily. The social classes are not receptive to terror ... Therefore one can answer the question, 'Do we still need terror?' only by responding: No, terror is no longer necessary."[92]

Speaking for the supporters of terror, Chernov did not respond directly on the principle level that he himself attributed to the debate. His tactical arguments left much to be desired; rhetoric replaced substance.[93] He admitted that assassinations, as the PSR had constantly emphasized, only had a purpose when connected to a mass movement. In the same breath, however, he added that terror and mass movement need not march "in step." Thus, contrary to his earlier statement, individual attacks were now permissible, and the PSR's acknowledged theoretical leader drew precisely that conclusion. He judged the current situation in these terms: "Terror is not compromised" but rather the party leadership is.[94] The Fighting Organization achieved its successes in 1904–1905 through its own ability and not on credit, and the power of terrorist action has not been broken in the post-revolutionary era. Chernov claimed that the masses were still waiting to be awakened. He even expressed the hope that with the old tactics the PSR would soon be stronger than ever. He also utterly failed to recognize the causal connection when he tried to interpret the Azef debâcle in a positive way. Azef's treason had dulled the terror as a weapon and now, after the discovery of his deed, it could be even more effectively used.[95] To the objections raised by Rubanovich, Bilit and Lebedev, which he regarded as the

[90] Dokumenty, p. 21f.

[91] Dokumenty, p. 20.

[92] Borisov, [B.G. Bilit], Nuzhen li eshche terror? Pis'mo v redaktsiiu, in: ZT No. 19 (July 1909), pp. 4–5, here p. 5. Response: B. Olenin [V.M. Chernov], Zametki o terrore, in: ZT No. 19 (July 1909), pp. 6–11.

[93] See Dokumenty, p. 8ff. and p. 23ff.

[94] Dokumenty, p. 11. See this argument in the PSR's first statement on the Azef affair: ZT No. 15 (February 1909), pp. 1–2.

[95] Dokumenty, p. 22.

most serious, Chernov could only respond that the PSR had always recognized the class character of the autocracy. Still, he also maintained that one could not speak of a new quality in the political maturity of the masses of workers and peasants and in the development of the bourgeois social structure. Consequently, he held fast to the received populist justification for terror as a method of struggle. As long as the state oppressed the masses, revolutionaries had to answer with the same means. As Gershuni put it before the delegates of the second party congress: "Where there are whips and straps, there are also revolvers and bombs."[96] Chernov, who above all was supported by Natanson,[97] came to the following conclusion: "The immediate task that now stands before us is the question of renewing terrorist activity and rebuilding the fighting organization ... We want to establish the struggle as something constant and organized."[98]

The majority of party congress delegates agreed with Chernov's argument to retain the old tactics.[99] Once again, the PSR confirmed that it did not regard political terror as a changeable tactic, as assumed by Rubanovich and emphasized by Chernov,[100] but instead as an essential and constitutive element of the party's populist identity. Consequently, the right opposition accused conservative SRs of holding the same opinion with regard to terror as the party's left wing who gathered around *Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'*.[101]

Despite this defeat, the anti-terrorist fronde did not abandon its fight to revise the party's tactic of terror. In fact, their voices became increasingly audible, and their arguments became an essential element in the conflict over the PSR's new general strategy. The platform of the *Pochin* group proved rather moderate, for it demanded only a temporary suspension of acts of violence. More radical articles by Shimanovskii, Lebedev, and others in *Izvestiia Zagranichnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta* argued for a complete rejection of political terror. Stolypin's murder in 1911 caused this faction to point out once more the ineffectiveness of such actions. The party must see that "public opinion protested categorically" and "condemned the deed energetically." At a time when new social strata and classes were dominant and the possibilities for legal political activity existed, Bogrov's bomb

[96] Protokoly 1907, p. 88.

[97] Dokumenty, p. 27.

[98] Dokumenty, p. 44.

[99] The vote was 6 in favor with three abstentions. See Dokumenty, p. 51f. The resolution is printed in: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 46. The third ZO conference came to the same conclusion. See: IOZK No. 11 (May 1909), p. 34. Similar: B. Savinkov, Terror i delo Azefa, in: ZT No. 15 (February), 10–12; V. Dal'nyi [V.J. Fabrikant], Terror i delo Azefa, in: IOZK No. 9 (February 1909), pp. 8–12.

[100] Dokumenty, p. 22, p. 29.

[101] See for this critique: B. Voronov/B.N. Lebedev, Terror i sotsialisticheskaia partiia, in: VZFGS No 16 (March 1912), p. 10–14, here: p. 12; Rezoliutsiia Parizhskoi Gruppy Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, Archive PSR 717.

had "awakened no one" but rather had greatly damaged the revolutionary movement.[102]

The failure of attempts after the fifth party council to renew the Fighting Organization proved that the critique of the "legal Socialist Revolutionaries" was correct. The changes of political and social conditions in the course of Russia's industrialization and modernization confirmed the argument of legal Socialist Revolutionaries that individual terror as a means of revolutionary politics was no longer relevant. This argument against the sacred inheritance of the Narodnaia Volia deserves closer examination in a theoretical perspective.

In general, the party understood political terror as a symbolic act. It was effective because, with only a minimal use of human and material resources, it could achieve maximum political results by creating fear and demonstrating the power of terrorists. Of course, terror was effective only in certain political and social conditions. It was plausibly argued that terrorists could only be successful when they enjoyed not merely a limited amount of real support but also when they could tap a substantial reservoir of latent support in a society whose foundations had already been shaken.[103] Precisely these conditions were present in Russia before the 1905 revolution, and these conditions explain the enormous political effects of the PSR's attacks on Sipiagin (1902) and Pleve (1904). But terrorists risk failure when they use violence as already accepted political groups. In this case they endanger their moral credibility. That is why the SRs suffered politically from terror during the 1905 revolution when they lost their most important financial supporters, the liberal intelligentsia. Because the resonance of political violence is so dependent upon specific social and political conditions, it is not an appropriate tactic for the long-term, even when its justification (viz., the injustice of the regime and the ineffectiveness of other methods) are considered valid. The PSR leadership was not sufficiently sensitive to this structural weakness of political terror; it failed to recognize that political terror was not an appropriate means to integrate the masses in the long run. At

[102] Ant. Savin [A.B. Shimanovskii], Pouchitel'nyi sluchai in: VZFGS No. 16 (March 1912), pp. 1–7, citation, p. 2, p. 5. Further: Shimanovskii, Bol'nye voprosy. IV, in: IOZK No. 15 (April 1911), pp. 1–9; B. Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Terror i sotsialisticheskaia partiia, in: VZFGS No. 16; Iv. G-in, O terrore, in IOZK, No. 17 (June 1912), pp. 7–13. Despite the obvious lack of success of the Stolypin assassination the following held fast to the appropriateness of the tactic of terror: Eshche o terrore, in: ZT No. 39 (January 1912), p. 6–8; Ovich, Pochemu zhe nam nado otkazat'sia ot terrora, in: VZFGS No. 17 (June 1912), pp. 7–13. See for an overview of the entire conflict: Polozhenie voprosa o terrore v Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. Sost. v okti. mesiatse 1913 g. po svedeniiam 'Nikolaia', OA XVI b(4) f. 1. From the liberal side: N.A. Gredeskul, Terror i Okhrana. (SPb. 1913). Also: F. [V.] Volkhovskii, Spasitel' otechestva, in: ZT No. 51 (July 1913), pp. 3–5. For assassinations in general see: A. Mushin, Dmitrii Bogrov i ubiistvo Stolypina. S. predisl. V.L. Burtseva. (Paris, 1914); Terror i delo Bogrova, in: ZT No. 38 (October 1911), pp. 5–6.

[103] See T. P. Thornton, Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation. In: H. Eckstein (ed.), Internal War. Problems and Approaches. Glencoe 1964, pp. 71-99, here p. 73.

best, terror could only achieve short-term mobilization. The SR's basic assumption proved fallacious: terror and organization were antipodes.

Moreover populist political terror suffered from specific problems caused by changes overtaking Russian economy and society since the late nineteenth century. As an instrument of SR strategy, political terror presupposed the personalization and representative selection of the enemy, and hence it assumed the model of a knightly duel. Conceived in this fashion, political terror as practiced by SRs was very closely bound to the character of rule in pre-modern agrarian societies. According to the populist justification for political terror, vengeance on the "small and the great, the local and the central, satraps of autocracy."[104] was most appropriate for a society in which political and personal rule were still identical, in which economic and political dependence still appeared in the form of private-personal rule, in which cohesion depended upon personal relations legitimated by tradition, and in which impersonal methods of rule were not yet dominant.[105]

At the same time political terror, as understood by the SRs, was especially modeled after a strongly centralized state apparatus which characterized the tsarist autocracy and, more generally, societies of the "agrarian bureaucracy"-type.[106] Thus the tactic of assassination was a genuine product of the Russian social and state structure. In this context, the central assumption of populist political terror made sense: terror was to attack, along with individual tsarist civil servants, autocratic rule itself. The SRs were probably aware that the state would simply replace a murdered official. Yet this fact did not raise any doubts about the justification of terror as a method in the political struggle.[107] Instead, the SRs simply reduced their expectations. By clinging to the belief that assassinations worked to "disorganize" autocracy, they maintained a faint glimmer of their original hope for complete freedom from servitude and bondage. Populist terror presupposed a theory of society that still understood rule to be a Behemoth, a many-headed monster – not a differentiated system of economic, social, and political relations.

This method of revolutionary struggle became increasing irrelevant as industrialization and modernization in Russia progressed. Although autocracy itself had initiated this process (which to be sure had its own peculiarities), it did tend to undermine the traditional structure of society, create new social classes and strata, and

[104] Pamiatnaia knizhka II, p. 5.

[105] See: Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p. 130ff.

[106] See e. g. B. Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. London 1967, pp. 415–17, p. 459.

[107] As far as we can tell, Lebedev based his criticism of terrorism on the argument that it would not always be the case that a Pleve, for example, would be succeeded by someone more moderate such as P.D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii. See B. Voronov [B.N. Lebedev], Terror i sotsialisticheskaia partiia, in: VZFGS No. 16, p. 13.

fundamentally change the conditions in which the revolutionary movement had to work. As political and economic domination became increasingly separated, domination became increasingly difficult to personalize. With the differentiation of the entire economic and social structure, the PSR faced an alternative: either adapt its terrorist activities (i.e., target all manifestations of oppression and allow "economic terror"), or completely abandon terror as a method. The Maximalists chose the first alternative, thus confirming that they were legitimate heirs of the PSR. More moderate Socialist Revolutionaries recognized that general terror could only produce mindless, chaotic destruction. They therefore rejected that kind of terror as a political tactic and refused to follow the Maximalists. However, because the moderates could not bring themselves to forbid acts of violence completely, they did not have a satisfactory solution to the problem of terror. The Maximalists correctly referred to this dilemma accusing their one-time mentors of inconsistency. Likewise Lebedev plausibly demanded to expand the ban on terror from the economic to the political sphere, arguing that the political sphere now definitely could be recognizd as a derivative of the economic.[108] As a consequence of the social effects of industrialization, the substitute character of terror became anachronistic. Rubanovich emphasized the anachronism of terror by pointing out the newly-awakened initiative of the masses.

From the end of 1905, political terror no longer worked to integrate the PSR. That was due not only to the Okhrana's counter-offensive, but also to the diminishing effectiveness of terror as a method of revolutionary struggle in a changed social and political reality. Thus 1905 marked a significant change in the populist conception of terror. The inner-party critique of terror proved another lesson from the revolution.

12.3.3. Decay of the *Obshchina* and the Crisis of the Socialist Revolutionary Program

As early as the first party congress, the SRs discussed rising doubts about the feasibility of realizing the central demands of their program – the socialization of land. The most knowledgeable critic, S. P. Shvetsov (a delegate from the Tomsk committee),[109] was greeted with applause when he raised objections to this plank in the party program. The delegates even asked him to summarize his position in a brochure.[110] Apparently, the audience was only superficially aware of the problems in the economic and social structure of the countryside that Shvetsov had raised. He reminded them that, for the transition to socialization of the land, the best form of the *ob-*

[108] Dokumenty, p. 20.

[109] Pseudonym, "Pashin."

[110] Protokoly 1906, p. 212. See: S.P. Shvetsov, Krest'ianskaia obshchina. Skhema eia vozniknoveniia i razvitiia. (SPb. 1906).

shchina – a workers' cooperative (*trudovaia obshchina*) – did not exist in Russia at all. What Russia did have was simply a "landowning and land-utilization cooperative" (*obshchina vladeniia i pol'zovaniia*). The expansion of this type of cooperative had to overcome resistance from the peasants, who "would not be prepared to open up *'obshchina'* land to the disposition of all." One also had to take into account the fact that their "feeling of property ownership" was already developed, for many of them had in fact become property owners. In addition, in many areas of Tsarist Russia individual peasants tilled their own land and so the SR program faced even more unfavorable conditions. With prophetic vision, Shvetsov warned the delegates that they had to be prepared for great difficulties even after a revolution, because capitalism had already had a strong impact on Russian agriculture. For example, it would be impossible to prohibit wage labor unless the PSR was prepared to control every peasant household and run the risk of creating a totalitarian state.[111]

The PSR's program suffered an additional shock from the agrarian reforms launched by Prime Minister P.A. Stolypin. These reforms, in effect, expressly intended to destroy the traditional village economic and social structure by forcing the creation of a strata of 'middle-peasants' producing for the market. The SR leadership could try to explain the failure of the 1905 revolution by citing organizational deficiencies in party work and the immaturity of the masses. The announcement that the old strategy must be more effectively practiced was a possible, if insufficient, answer. The party could not overcome the changes in socio-economic structure of the countryside (engineered by the autocratic state) by a mere change in tactics, because the very demand for socialization of the land risked becoming irrelevant. The very foundations of neo-populist theory were in danger.

The PSR's first response to the Stolypin law of 9 November 1906, this "illegal child of the inter-Duma-period,"[112] denied just this danger. The party judged the reforms to be an attempt to split the peasantry. Consequently, the party recommended that the peasants oppose the government by remaining united, by boycotting the commissions to reparcel agricultural land, by refusing to sell or lease land, by not leaving the *obshchina*, and wherever possible and necessary by redistributing the land.[113] However, by the middle of 1907, Rakitnikov had to admit that Tsarist policy had achieved some success. He described the actual situation by claiming that because the Duma could not give the peasants any land, after the coup d'état of 3 June 1907, the selling of land had become "an epidemic." Although this process

[111] Protokoly 1906, p. 184ff. and p. 205ff.; citation p. 184 and p. 208.

[112] N. Maksimov [N.I. Rakitnikov], Razlozhenie obshchiny i nasha programma, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 1 (1910), pp. 131–174, here p. 131.

[113] Chto delat' krest'ianam. Po povodu ukaza 9 noiabria 1906 goda, in: Zemlia i volia. No. 3 (15 March 1907), pp. 2–5.

did not create enemies of the revolution (since the buyers had a burning interest in the "liberation from bank payments"), it had destroyed the former solidarity in the village. Much more damaging were the losses suffered by the *obshchina,* as strata of the rural population had an especially strong tendency to withdraw: (1) the proletarian elements, who wanted to sell their modest strips of land and migrate to the cities; and, (2) the "many-soul families" (mnogodushniki), who currently used more land then they could expect to keep after a new distribution. Rakitnikov could only suggest the old tactics to combat these developments: "a broad and solid organization of the peasantry," renewal of the *obshchina,* and intensified propaganda against the idea of private property.[114]

None of these recommendations was of much help. The SRs had to recognize that they could not stop or retard the undesirable (from their perspective) dissolution of the traditional village community. In delivering the Central Committee report on the agrarian question at the London general conference, Rakitnikov even noted a strong tendency of peasants in Saratov province – the region of core support for the PSR – to leave the *obshchina.*[115] Nevertheless, the majority of delegates and the party leadership refused to accept the implications that such developments bore for the party program. Rather, the PSR preferred to maintain the validity of old positions, notwithstanding the new conditions. But the arguments the party used to buttress the old positions became increasingly vague; in the process, they tended to make the statements of the first party congress, which had never been very concrete, even more nebulous. Rakitnikov made the first attempt to rescue the party program at the London conference in 1908 when he explained: "Our expectations and hopes, our program, do not rest on a common tilling of the land but on the complex of ideas, feelings, and habits, on that total psychology that peasantry acquired during the whole of its previous history."[116]

Thus the SR based its program not on the *obshchina* as an institution but rather on "a certain understanding of the evolution of agriculture."[117] In addition, the party program had never claimed that the commune would prevent the proletarianization of Russia. Instead, it had simply protested against the orthodox Marxist view that Russia's future would look like contemporary England.[118] When these reinterpretations of the party program appeared inadequate, Rakitnikov fled to a desperate

[114] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Zadachi partii v derevne, in: ZT No. 3 (1 August 1907), p. 6f.; idem, Differentsiatsiia v krest'ianstve i zadachi partii, in: ZT No. 5 (12 September 1907), pp. 7–9. See also the relevant resolution of the first general conference from August 1908 in: Pamiatnaia knizhka I, p. 40f.

[115] Protokoly 1908, p. 187.

[116] Protokoly 1908, 184.

[117] N. Maksimov [N.I. Rakitnikov]. Razlozhenie obshchiny, p. 167.

[118] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Agrarnaia politika pravitel'stva i nasha programma, in: ZT No. 27 (April 1910), pp. 3–9, here p. 6.

stubbornness. Even as the reality of Russia after 1905 threatened to undermine the fundamental assumptions of populist politics, in 1910 Rakitnikov tried to encourage defeatist comrades by urging the PSR not to give up on the *obshchina* as long as it "has not yet disappeared from the face of Russian earth." The party had to do two things simultaneously – admit defeat, yet not accept it.[119]

An article on the principles of the party program marked a new turning point in the SR leaders' search for a solution to this question. The piece tried to provide a more solid basis for the party's demand that the land be socialized. Chernov referred to Rakitnikov as being " 'alone, alone, the poor beggar who was the recruit on watch' and the one who carried the burden of the 'last Mohican' " in defending the party's agrarian program.[120] Rakitnikov identified three different forms of departure from the *obshchina*: (1) the complete separation, whereby the peasant acquired his own farm; (2) the separation of land only, with the peasant continuing to reside in the village; and, (3) consolidation of different strips of land into a single large parcel within the *obshchina*. Rakitnikov's first thesis was that the overwhelming majority of peasants who left the *obshchina* belonged to the third category. However, among these peasants one did not find "those fanatical defenders of private property" that the government would love to see. In fact, the mentality of these peasants still bound them to the *obshchina* and so they were still fit subjects for SR agitation. Rakitnikov generalized his observation and came to the surprising conclusion: "A convinced supporter of independent farming can still accept the socialization of the land, because the principles governing the use and distribution of land operate on different levels and are not contradictory ... Our project is not opposed to individual farms."[121]

Naturally, it was theoretically correct to hold that individual use did not necessarily mean that peasants would become small landowners. Still, this distinction could not hide the reinterpretation of the SR agrarian program that had just taken place. In 1902 Chernov had excused the "desire for land" of the peasantry and explained that it was the "striving" of the "weakest and the most unprotected" for a "certain minimum of relative independence and security."[122] In 1911, under the impression of the temporary results of Stolypin's reform policies, the small farmer who produced for profit and the market had become acceptable to the PSR. This acceptance of small farmers was a consequence of the party's oft repeated claim that neo-populist

[119] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Agrarnaia politika pravitel'stva i nasha taktika, in: ZT No. 30 (August 1910), pp. 1–6, here p. 4.

[120] Chernov, Zemlia i pravo, p. 199.

[121] N.M. [N.I. Rakitnikov], Sotsializatsiia zemli i nasha programma-minimum, in: Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner No. 3 (1911), pp. 237–300, citation, p. 283, p. 284 and p. 291.

[122] [V.M. Chernov], Programmnye voprosy. Sotsializatsiia zemli i kooperatsiia v sel'skom khoziaistve, in: RR No 14 (December 1902), p. 6.

principles were not only valid for Russia but could also be supported by the "small peasantry" of western Europe.[123] Nevertheless, the party was simply taking account of reality. As early as 1907, a letter from Tula province gave an exemplary response to a question posed in a survey of the peasants, asking which strata of the village population was the most strongly for the revolution: "The most solid peasants in the struggle are those who live off their own farms, that means the well-to-do and the middle peasants: they insist that they do not have to work for the noble landowners. But the poor do not agree, because their most important income are the wages from the noble landowners."[124]

In 1917, the PSR took a further step toward opening its agrarian program to small property owners. Vikhliaev (Chernov's most important assistant during his service as Agriculture Minister in the Provisional Government) wrote the only brochure that sought to make the party's demand for socialization of the land more precise. He was much clearer than Rakitnikov in assuring the middle peasants that they had nothing to fear from the PSR: "In order not to anger the worker-peasants, we must make it a rule that all land which is currently the property of peasant families and which they use without wage laborers will remain for their use, even if the size of this land exceeds the average norm per person (*sredniaia dushevnaia norma*) set for the each region."[125] In other words, the distribution land – the core of the populist revolution – and the beginning of the transition to a socialist order would no longer touch large portions of agrarian private property. In the end, the PSR wound up rejecting its original objectives and accommodated itself to the striving for private property or at least individually used land of its peasant clientele.

By adapting the agrarian program to the process of social differentiation in agriculture (and the extent of this differentiation in the years 1909–10 was surely overestimated by the party), the SR leadership demonstrated more flexibility than in its decisions on tactics. Nevertheless, the leadership came under fire from both camps of the inner-party opposition. Iudelevskii spoke for the left-wing as early as the London General Conference in 1908 and questioned the value of the distinction between "*obshchina*" and "*obshchina* psyche."[126] Agafonov repeated the objections at the fifth party council meeting. In a sharp attack on the Central Committee, he complained that the "real peasant party, the PSR, was the weakest party in the peasantry" and indeed was even weaker than Social Democracy. For him, this was the necessary

[123] According to Rakitnikov, among others, in: N.M., Agrarnaia politika, in: ZT 27, p. 2.

[124] Tul'skaia guberniia. PSR Archive 799. It was probably no accident that I. Rakitnikova ignored such answers in her analysis of the survey. See I. Ritina [I.I. Rakitnikova], Iz materialov krest'ianskoi ankety, in: ZT No. 26 (February 1910), pp. 4-12 and No. 27 (April 1910), pp. 13–20. For the relationship between the PSR and the kulaks see also Perrie, Agrarian Policy, p. 74ff.

[125] P. [A.] Vikhliaev, Kak uravniat' pol'zovanie zemlei, p. 16, emphasis from M.H.

[126] Protokoly 1908, p. 189.

consequence of a failed policy. He argued that the party should not try to save the SR program by separating it from the fate of the *obshchina*, but rather should hinder this development – i.e., by means of an immediate revolution to rescue the *obshchina* from decay.[127]

While the Neo-maximalists again charged the leadership with defeatism, the right-wing complained of just the opposite – namely, that the party center held fast to hopeless revolutionary positions. For those on the right, early doubts about the party's agrarian program had become certainties. A moderate delegate to the fifth party council expressed these certainties when he commented on Rakitnikov's assurance that a SR peasant who had left the *obshchina* could continue to be a PSR member. In his words: "I do not know, but it is impossible to go to those who have left [the *obshchina*] with the old contents of our program, for they are now property owners."[128] In 1910, dissatisfaction in the party caused a flood of protests. Critics accused Rakitnikov of being a "hopeless Don Quixote": by invoking the old slogan that "everything is excellent," he was merely trying to conserve old solutions – no matter how hopeless their realization might be.[129] Another critic even voiced the view that by advocating the separation of the *obshchina* as an institution from the party program, the supporters of this position stood "in direct contradiction to the program" of 1906. He also proved that "gradually the entire country," including the agricultural sector, would be integrated into capitalist relations and the collapse of the socialization of the land would be sealed.[130] Shimanovskii gave the SR program the coup de grâce when he objected: "Bourgeois principles are expanding over the entire area of agricultural relations; all land is being changed into a good; the principles of private property are being consolidated ... In this manner, forces opposed to solidarity and socialism are created in the peasantry, and hence ...our program is losing its central foundation."[131]

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[127] Stenogr. otch. piatogo soveta P.S.-R., 24-oe zas., p. 15ff., PSR Archive 792.

[128] Stenogr. otch. piatogo P.S.-R., 24-oe zas., p. 2, PSR Archive 792.

[129] Andrei Ivanovich, Chto sluchilos', in: IOZK No. 13 (January 1911), pp. 16–18.

[130] A.N. Alekseevskii, K voprosu ob osnovaniiakh nashei agrarnoi programmy, in: IOZK No. 13 (January 1911), pp. 8–13 and No. 14 (February 1911), pp. 5–16, citation No. 13, p. 9 and No. 14, p. 12, p. 16.

[131] Ant. Savin [A.B. Shimanovskii], Bol'nye voprosy, in: IOZK No. 14, p. 1. Additional criticism of Rakitnikov's position came from: Staryi rabotnik [N.N. Sokolov], Nabolevshie voprosy (Pis'mo k tovarishcham), in: ZT No. 25 (January 1910), pp. 10–13; Evgen'ev [E. Stalinskii], Obshchina i nasha agrarnaia programma, in: ZT No. 34 (February 1911), pp. 4–8; B.Iu. [N.N. Chernenkov], Razrushenie obshchiny i nasha programma, in: ZT No. 35 (April 1911), pp. 3–6; No. 36 (June 1911), pp. 3–7; No. 37 (July 1911), pp. 4–8. On the other hand, with the help of the neo-populist theory of agrarian economy Chernenkov argued that as a consequence of cyclical processes of mobility (see Shanin, Awkward Class) the peasant population of Russia could not build solid classes: B.Iu. [N.N. Chernenkov], Kupliaprodazha nadel'noi zemli i razlozhenie krest'ianstva na klassy, in: ZT No. 41 (March 1912), pp. 3–5; No. 44 (June 1912), pp. 6–9. Rakitnikov offered his support: Evg. [E.] Kolosov, Istoricheskaia spravka (Pis'mo v redaktsiiu), in: VZFGS No. 16 (16 March 1912), p. 21;

Whether the analysis of the opposition took full account of all the contradictions of Russian industrialization and especially development in the agrarian sector is an open question. There is certainly cause for the assumption that the SR right-wing tended to throw the baby out with the bath because of their readiness to acknowledge the total victory of the bourgeois capitalist order. In any case, transformation of the agrarian sector (with all of its difficulties) and decay of the *obshchina* (which in fact was not dissolving as rapidly as the statistics for 1909–1910 might have suggested) did indeed support the critics in the PSR. Some in the party began to realize that industrialization and modernization threatened the theoretical foundation of Populism. They lost faith in the agrarian socialist utopia, faith that a future society based on a pre-capitalist order with common property and the right to land was at all possible. It was this dilemma that the right opposition tried to solve and, especially in the agrarian question, brought them close to Menshevik and liberal democratic positions.

12.4. The Missed Connection

From the beginning of 1911, there were growing signs that new revolutionary unrest was at hand. The workers gradually threw off the passivity that had seized them after 1907. Despite the economic growth that set in about 1909, the workers began once again to protest against living conditions and wage levels that had remained very low. Although security forces suppressed strikes and demonstrations with much loss of life, such oppression only provoked greater resistance. Social unrest acquired a more explosive character. In April 1912, violence broke out anew when Tsarist soldiers shot striking workers in the gold fields near the Lena River. Like Bloody Sunday in 1905, this incident ignited a wave of solidarity and mass strikes that did not end until World War I. Soon the SR organizations reported a noticeable increase in activity.[132] The PSR's convalescence, which Chernov had very prematurely proclaimed in 1908, now appeared to have finally begun.

However, the exiled Neo-Populists had to recognize after only a short time that such hopes were in vain. Because the unrest was limited to the cities alone, a significant difference from 1905, and because the peasantry remained largely indifferent,

Conditional: Chernov, (Sotsializatsiia zemli kak takticheskaia problema. In the columns of the PSR's new, legal paper "Zavety" (founded by Chernov) the debate was changed after 1912 into a largely depoliticized conflict over the theory of agrarian evolution. Among others see: N.P. Oganovskii, K peresmotru agrarnoi programmy, in: Zavety No. 5 (August 1912) otd. II, pp. 1–37; Response N. Suchanov [N.N. Gimmer], Po voprosam nashikh vzgliadov na krest'ianstvo, in: Zavety No. 1 (January 1913) otd. II, pp. 118–135.

[132] See, among others: V. Galin, Peterburg, in: ZT No. 43 (May 1912), pp. 13–14; O zasedanii Soveta Bakinskoi organizatsii P.S.-R., sostoiashchemsia v seredine iiunia 1912 g., in: ZT No. 45 (September 1912), pp. 25–28.

this new wave of unrest did not reach expected levels of violence and vigor. And this time the PSR was even less able to influence the demonstrations and strikes than in the initial phase of the first Russian revolution. The central SR paper described the situation in these terms: "The reaction separated us far from the masses; our complete dispersion and the disorganization of our forces made it impossible for us to influence the masses in any way." The party was forced to acknowledge its "phenomenal helplessness" in this "unhappy history."[133] Even the railroad workers and the post and telegraph workers unions held their distance.[134]

But the proletariat was not the only group in which the PSR failed to establish contacts. The intelligentsia did not return to the party. Whenever and wherever the intelligentsia was prepared to engage in oppositionist activity (and significant portions of the intelligentsia apparently were prepared work for the opposition), it preferred legal organizations. Numerous populist circles and newspapers were founded all over Russia.[135] But most of these new circles and groups had only loose ties with the party. In the informal organizations, which were important as crystallization points for new political engagement, a Socialist Revolutionary was rarely found. If one of these new groups did have an SR, more often than not, as reported from south Russia, he was a *Pochinets* – a member of the right wing.[136] In view of these conditions, the orthodox PSR leadership in exile was forced to make certain concessions to the new forms of the revolutionary movement. Since 1910 Chernov, being involved in a strident controversy with his former Central Committee colleagues and largely retiring from party work,[137] had endeavored to found a legal theoretical paper. In 1912 he could finally realize his plans by beginning publication of *Zavety* (The Legacy).[138] At the same time the Central Committees incumbent Foreign Delegation attempted to create a kind of second, moderate central party paper. Though *Zhivaia Mysl'* (The Living Thought)[139] appears to have had contacts with local populist periodicals these measures came late and apparently did not have intensive support from the party. Not surprisingly, such activities failed to end the PSR's isolation.

[133] In. Ritina [I.I. Rakitnikov], K voprosu o perezhivaemom momente, in: ZT No. 44 (June 1912), pp. 3–5.

[134] Novyi pod"em, in: ZT No. 53, p. 1.

[135] See Kratkaia zapiska o polozhenii Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, sostavlennaia po svedeniiam "Nikolaia" v oktiabre mesiatse 1913 g., OA XVI b (3) f. 4 as well as the extensive correspondence of the ZD's literature transport commission which was directed by Argunov in PSR Archive 87 a and b.

[136] See Iz iuzhnogo goroda, in: ZT No. 43 (May 1912), pp. 14–15.

[137] See a letter from Chernov to the Zagranichnaia Delegatsiia Ts.K. P.S.-R. from 1912, PSR Archive 864.

[138] Zavety. Ezhemesiachnyi zhurnal. SPb. 1912–1914.

[139] Zhivaia Mysl' (with changing titles: Zavetnaia Mysl', Vol'naia Mysl', Severnaia Mysl', Bodraia Mysl', Vernaia Mysl', Mysl' Truda, Smelaia Mysl', Zhivaia Mysl' Truda). 1913. The ZD corresponded with, above all, the boards of editors of the papers "Trudovoi Golos" (Voice of the Workers) in St. Petersburg, "Golos Truda" (Voice of Work) in Kiev and "Mysl' Truda" (Thought of Work). See PSR Archive 87 a and b.

CHAPTER 13

The PSR and Modernization: Was There a Populist Alternative?

Without question, it would be a mistake to try to establish a direct, causal connection between the history of SR theory and practice (above all, the increasingly ineffective political terror, the crisis of the organization, and the erosion of the programmatic foundation of Populism) and the fate of the PSR in the decisive year of the 1917 Revolution. Any attempt to make its "agnosticism" toward capitalist industrialization the sole cause of the neo-populist failure would be an unwarranted simplification of a complex history. Doubtless, it was the *immediate* failures in the summer of 1917 that sealed the political fate of the SRs. We must also not forget that the war was an important reason for divisions within the party. Indeed, it was war that essentially determined the condition and actions of the party in 1917. Finally, subjective elements in the history of the PSR were of great importance. The roles played by Chernov and the speakers of the right wing, namely Avksent'ev, A. Gots, and Zenzinov, cannot be disregarded. We must also ask ourselves the same question posed by Chernov: would the party have taken another course had Gershuni and M. Gots not died prematurely? Could the charisma of the popular tribune and the firm hand of the organizer have averted the decay that crippled the party after 1909? Could the united strength of all three leaders have presented a force equal to Lenin and Trotsky in 1917? However that may be, the fact remains that the behavior of the PSR during the February regime can only be properly understood in the light of

the party's earlier history. The conflicts over SR theory and practice during the pre-war years determined the course taken by the dominant forces in the party in 1917. The conflicts that erupted in 1917 had their source in controversies that began before 1914. One can highlight the continuity by pointing to four elements that may be regarded as the central *long-term* causes for the failure of Neo-Populism.

1. More than other comparable groups, the PSR had to contend with the problem of splits in the party. Indeed, after 1902 the formation of party factions actually never ceased. But there is good reason to regard only two factions as real secessions. The new groupings that seriously threatened party unity were, first, that of the Maximalists in 1906 (since it had the support of strong radicalization in the rank and file),[1] and, second, the *Pochin* group (since it formed part of the hard-core SR leadership and brought a split in the Central Committee). In addition, the objectives of the "legal Socialist Revolutionaries" justify to treat them as a faction that posed a real threat to the PSR, for they demanded not only a superficial accommodation of received policies to the changed situation but nothing less than the rejection of the tactical repertoire and the theoretical heritage of the classical Populism of the 1870s. Whereas the activity of classical Populism presupposed a divide between the revolutionary élite and the passive, "dark" masses, the legal Socialist Revolutionaries claimed that "social independent action" had overcome this divide.

With this concept of *obshchestvennost'*, the *Pochin* Group tried to identify what might be described as the delayed creation of "public sphere." Of course, this phenomenon remained just as rudimentary as the entire liberal-constitutional system in Russia. However, because Russia's socio-economic backwardness created the middle-classes and the proletariat *at the same time*, from the very beginning Russia, in contrast to the western European model,[2] had two forms of "public sphere." First, at the higher levels of Russian society, the Duma was a continuation of the political circles, clubs, and banquets where—with increasing vigor since the turn of the century – the political opinions of "society" (the educated classes) were formed. This form of "public sphere" was the source of the liberal parties formed during the 1905 revolution.[3] Second, at the lower levels of the social pyramid, parallel developments were occurring in the trade unions, in the educational associations, and in the urban and rural cooperatives. A "public sphere" of the lower and middle classes acquired legality; it was not directly political but rather based primarily upon economic interests. However, in times of crisis these new social institutions contained great

[1] See [V. M. Chernov], Razval ili konsolidatsiia, in: ZT Nos. 21–22 (September 1909), p. 2.

[2] See J. Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (Neuwied, Berlin 3rd ed. 1968).

[3] See in addition to Note 3 of the Introduction: T. Emmons, The Beseda Circle 1899-1905. In: SR 32 (1973), pp.461-490

political potential. Although both sectors of "public sphere" – the bourgeois as well as the *trudovaia obshchestvennost'* (to use the socialist revolutionary term) – were limited in their functions and rights, the primary task of revolutionary parties was to use these nascent forms of public expression to further the revolutionary cause. The objective of parties was thus to mediate between the legal and illegal forms for the expression of social interests. The orthodox SRs, however, believed that they were strong enough to ignore the new institutions of public sphere. The Right Opposition first realized that, with this attitude, the PSR not only avoided attempts at appeasement by the government, but also spurned the formation of new forms of political life.

Because the *Pochintsy* drew consequences from the rise of new forms of political expression, they envisioned something new: the change of the PSR from an amorphous social movement into a party that intended to represent primarily the interests of the agrarian population. There is no question that this process remained just as incomplete as the creation of a "middle peasantry" in the course of the Stolypin reforms or as the construction of democratic political structures. In the same way, the *Pochin* group did indeed maintain its character as an organization of the intelligentsia, which could never make good its claim to represent the whole of the oppressed people of Russia. However, the tendency towards becoming a peasant-oriented party became the more manifest as Russia's economic and social transformation appeared to eliminate the conditions for "socialization of the land" (although the degree of disintegration in the *obshchina* was overestimated). As shown above, even orthodox SRs demonstrated that they understood the importance of this process by substantially changing their agrarian program with the acceptance of small landowners. The metamorphosis was completed in 1917 as a situation of increasing political polarization forced all participants to take concrete positions and initiate definite programs. It now became clear that the PSR, under the influence of the right wing, tried to prevent a radical transformation of rural property;[4] that it attempted to hinder the spontaneous initiative of the peasantry in the form of "black repartition" (a policy that the party twelve years earlier had advocated); and that by calling for regulation of the land question by the Constituent Assembly, it now took the very same legalistic and cautious position of which it had accused the People's Socialist during the 1905 Revolution. All these new policies were opposed to the party's own program and the demands that it had made for years. The PSR had ceased being the militant avant-garde of village poverty that did not even fear the use of violence in order to promote spontaneous agrarian revolution. The proposed agrarian law of the last SR Minister of Agriculture, S.L. Maslov, made the PSR's new position clear.

[4] In 1917 Peshekhonov noted with satisfaction the party's programmatic changes even though in his opinion the PSR did not quite go far enough. See: Peshekhonov, Pochemu my togda ushli, p 17f.

This draft went far to accommodate rural landowners and had nothing at all in common with the party's original policy of "socialization of the land."[5] Thus Radkey could pointedly state that in 1917 the "main contingent of conservatives" was not found among Kadets, but rather among the ranks of the PSR.[6]

At the same time, the Left SRs (and with reservations, the left center around Chernov as well) maintained the received heritage of Populism, with its typical mixture of revolutionary and restorative elements. They approved of the agrarian social revolution. Together with the Bolsheviks, they introduced the Land Decree that the Second All-Russian Congress of the Workers and Soldiers Soviets passed on 26 October 1917. They became the advocate for those classes that profited from the land decree – that is, primarily the middle peasants who could not employ labor and had just enough land to secure their own survival.[7] But it was also the Left SRs who, for one last time, revived the terror of Narodnaia Volia in their struggle against the Bolsheviks.[8] In many respects, Maximalism experienced a second renaissance in the Left SRs, who generally held to the anti-state, decentralized, and anarchic beliefs of radical Populism.

The polarization in the neo-populist party cannot be adequately explained by merely pointing to differences of opinion over the war. In fact, the causes of this polarization reach back to the controversies over the lessons of the first Russian Revolution, over the new political structures created by the first revolution, and over the significance of the masses' entry masses into political life. On the party's right wing, which soon proved itself the most competent and effective politically, the political-programmatic continuity accompanied a continuity in personnel as well. Many *Pochintsy* of 1911, namely Avksent'ev and Fundaminskii, were notable leaders of those SRs close to the Kadets in 1917. The "triumph of the centrifugal over the centripetal forces" in the PSR that Chernov so regretted[9] was due to deeper causes: *controversial strategies for the solution of the crisis of the received populist politics that were brought about by Russia's industrialization and modernization.*

Seen in this way, the loss of the "synthetic character" of the PSR reflected the fate of Populism in general. To the degree that Populism arose in backward societies as a defensive agrarian social movement (reacting to the expansion of industrial capitalism and urban society), Populism had to change its political form as modern-

[5] See Radkey, Agrarian Foes, p. 445ff.; Details in Kostrikin, Manevry eserov v agrarnom voprose.

[6] Radkey, Sickle, p. 491.

[7] See Radkey, Sickle, pp. 95ff, 138.

[8] After the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the break-up of the coalition government. The PSR, on the other hand, had by this time rejected political terror and believed that it was an inappropriate tactic against the Bol'shevik regime. See: Izveshchenie Ts.K. Partii Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov. 5 December 1920, Hoover Institution Ts Russia P 274.

[9] See Note 29 of the Introduction.

ization progressed. Populism lost its character as a revolutionary movement when its non-capitalist alternative of socio-economic progress degenerated into a chimera devoid of any connection with contemporary reality. The symbiosis of restorative and progressive elements, which made up its typical ambivalence, lost its foundation and conservative tendencies became more pronounced. There is much to say for the thesis that faction building in the PSR can be understood as the complement of the transformation of agrarian socialism into "peasantism."

2. Socialist Revolutionaries had little regard for "organization" as an instrument of revolutionary politics. If it is true that modernization creates an "organizational imperative"[10] because it destroys old authority and political structures without necessarily replacing them with new authority and structures, the PSR did not understand the reality of contemporary Russia. Just as political terror (in the populist conception) corresponded more to a traditional agrarian society, so too must the PSR's organization be seen as anachronistic. Lenin and the Bolsheviks confirmed the hypothesis that in a modernizing world the future belongs to those who know how to organize their politics. That the obverse was also true is evident in the fate of the SRs, providing that Chernov's admonition was justified: "Without organization a political class ... or a party is in a condition of political powerlessness, of historical impotence, no matter how strong numerically or how high its consciousness may be."[11]

3. Just as in the 1905 Revolution, the PSR in the second revolution did not know how to integrate that section of society in whose name it claimed to speak – viz., the peasantry. Simply to point to failures of political agitation or the intellectualism of the populist intelligentsia as causes for these problems is not enough. In fact, there is reason to see in the failure of the PSR to integrate the peasantry a manifestation of those characteristics of agrarian social movements in backward societies that, as a rule, ensured that peasant uprisings remained nothing more than simple rebellions and prevented them from becoming a revolutionary movement with the objective of transforming the current economic, political, and social system as a whole.

Thus far, it has been argued that Neo-Populism lost its political effectiveness because of insufficient accommodation to modernization. But it is also true that Russia's backwardness took from Neo-Populism the possibility of achieving its most important objective. In the end, the PSR remained a party of the intelligentsia; under the given conditions, it could not become a party of the rural masses.

4. By advocating in its program the utopian vision of a communist agrarian society, over time the PSR found itself increasingly at odds with the reality of contemporary Russia. Even when industrialization and modernization in Russia progressed

[10] Huntington, Political Order, p. 640.

[11] [V.M. Chernov], Voisko i revoliutsiia, in: RR No. 21 (1 April 1903), p. 1.

unevenly and even though pre-industrial, "feudal" relationships remained in agriculture, nevertheless the possibility of non-capitalist development towards socialism became increasingly unrealistic. The PSR lost that essential quality of every successful strategy of revolutionary politics – viz., the capacity to present an objective for Russian society *as a whole*. As A. Gerschenkron observed: "To deny the possibility of successful industrialization at a time when industrial development began to move forward with very great speed was obviously contradictory to the facts." This meant not only a "tragic surrender of realism to utopia,"[12] but also reduced the political effectiveness of Neo-Populism in its conflict with Social Democracy.

Despite all the controversies about the state of Russian economic development on the eve of World War I, it is clear that the fall of the autocracy in 1917 was not solely the product of defeat on the battle field. No less important in the destruction of tsarism was the comprehensive structural crisis caused by rapid industrialization and modernization, further exacerbated by war and political intransigence. Thus the Russian Revolution has been contrasted to the bourgeois-democratic upheavals in Western Europe and held to be the first example of a *new type* of revolution – resulting from the pressure to overcome economic and socio-political backwardness and being fueled by extreme ideologies as a "revolution from outside."[13] Th. von Laue, in particular, has suggested this concept for the interpretation of Russian history from Witte to Stalin. In his opinion both the demise of autocracy and the perversion of the bolshevik régime into Stalinist dictatorship, are to be seen as necessary concomitants of the industrialization process. A rule that sought its legitimacy in the economic development of the country without finding the indispensible motivation and discipline in the society did not have any other choice except to replace these preconditions by deliberate force. That is why a single, all-powerful will seemed appropriate to promote Russian modernization. This will, however, was only to be found with the Bolsheviks who were the best organized and had a dominant leader, a true 'anti-tsar', among them. Seen from this perspective, Stalinism, according to von Laue, was not Thermidor, but the 'Fructidor' of the Russian Revolution.[14]

To be sure, this line of argument invites critique. It leans toward determinism and tends to exclude the possibility of alternatives *a priori*. Nevertheless its basic assumption remains convincing for the process as a whole: that there was a *direct connection between the imperative to economic and social modernization and post-revolutionary development.* If, however, it is true that those political forces in *fin-*

[12] A. Gerschenkron, Franco Venturi on Russian Populism. In Russian Populism, in: AHR 78 (October 1973), pp. 969–986, here p. 973.

[13] Th. v. Laue, Die Revolution von aussen als erste Phase der Russischen Revolution 1917. In: JfGO 4 (1956), pp. 138-158; idem, Westernization, Revolution, and the Search for a Basis of Authority: Russia in 1917. In: SS 19 (1967), pp. 15-180.

[14] See von Laue, Why Lenin? Why Stalin?, pp. 60,110,138,202, and pass.

de-siécle Russia seeking to assume state power had, above all, to possess the ability to direct the economic development effectively, the converse was also true: a party that ignored this necessity and that looked backwards – such a party risked loosing the future. Seen from the long-term perspective, the PSR failed primarily – although not solely – because, once the modern, industrial world had become established in Russia, a populist party could no longer fulfill its role as an agent of modernization.

To end with this conclusion one would, however, show only one side of the coin. Just as the PSR's role as an advocate for a non-capitalist future for Russia became increasingly problematic, it was also true that both Social Democratic factions overestimated the advance of industrialization and chose mistaken policies, especially with respect to the peasantry. In order to understand properly the problems of the Russian revolutionary movement and the fate of the revolution, one must not forget the *partial,* incomplete character of industrialization and modernization of Tsarist Russia. On the one hand, economic and socio-political development had made rapid progress; on the other hand remained traditional socio-economic relations in the countryside, while autocracy retained its power to block liberal politics and legal trade unions. On the one hand, institutions of political articulation for society were recognized after 1905; on the other hand, they were not permitted any real participation and organic development. On the one hand, the analysis of the PSR founders was correct in that the divide between the city and countryside would gradually close in the course of industrialization and that communication between the conscious, revolutionary intelligentsia and the "dark" masses would be easier. On the other hand, the PSR leadership in its euphoria failed to see how long this process in Russia would take. On the one hand, mass recruitment of peasant soldiers for the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 led to an extraordinary political mobilization of the peasantry; on the other hand, that mobilization did not eliminate the fundamental impediments to the political organization of the rural population. On the one hand, Lenin was correct maintaining in 1897 that capitalism was proceeding in Russia (thereby contradicting the theories of the early Populists); on the other hand, he measured Russia by West European standards.

Further contradictions could be noted. It appears that a radical change in Russia was unavoidable. But the Liberals were too afraid to bring this about, and the two strongest revolutionary forces – the SRs and the Bolsheviks – were unable to overcome the divide between the agrarian and the urban sectors of society. This impossibility of integrating the city and the countryside constituted a *fundamental dilemma* of the Russian Revolution, which can be hold as the main cause of the failure of both Populism and the experiment of a socialist society.

Abbreviations

TsEH	Tsentral'nii Komitet (Central Comittee)
CMRS	Cashiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique
ISSR	Istoriia SSSR
IZ	Istoricheskie Zapiski
JfGO	Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
JMH	Journal of Modern History
JPS	Journal of Peasant Studies
KiS	Katorga i Ssylka
SEER	Slavonic and East European Review
SR	Slavic Review
SS	Slavic Studies
VLGU	Vestnik Leningradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta
VMGU	Vestnik Moskovskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta
VRR	Vestnik Russkoi Revoliutsii

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APPENDIX A

Chronology

Since 1895	Emergence of socialist revolutionary groups
1896	Kiev Group of Socialist Revolutionaries, "Alliance of Socialist Revolutionaries" later the "Northern Alliance"
1898	Programmatic brochure, "Nashi zadachi"
1899	Workers Party for the Political Liberation of Russia
1900	Manifesto of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (Southern Groups); Agrarian Socialist League
Winter 1901/02	Founding of the PSR
April 1902	Founding of the "Battle Organization of the PSR"; Assassination of the Minister of the Interior D.S. Sipiagin
1902–04	Building up of the party organization
1903	Founding of the "Foreign Organization"
1904	Publication of the party program; opposition of the "Agarniki"
July 1904	Assassination of the Minister of the Interior V.K. fon Pleve
Feb. 1905	Assassination of Grand Prince Sergei Aleksandrovich

Dec. 1905–Jan. 1906	First party conference
1906	Secession of the Maximalists
May 1906	First party council
Oct. 1906	Second party council
Jan. 1907	Renewal of the foreign organization
Feb. 1907	Second extraordinary party conference
July 1907	Third party council
Aug. 1908	First conference of the entire party; Fourth party council
1908	Founding of the "Paris Group of the Socialist Revolutionaries"
Dec. 1908	Unmasking of Azef as Okhrana spy
April/May 1909	Fifth party council
1911	Founding of the "Pochin" Group.
May 1917	Third party congress
Nov./Dec. 1917	Fourth party congress
Nov. 1917	Founding of the "Party of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries"
1922	Trial of the PSR

APPENDIX B

Short Biographies

Agafonov, V.K. (1863–?) scholar and journalist; studied in the mathematical-physical faculty; expelled from university in 1887; arrested in 1894 because of membership in a successor group of the "Narodnaia Volia"; Became known to the police in connection with student unrest in 1901; since 1908 he was a leading member of the "Paris Group of Socialist Revolutionaries"; 1917 he belonged to the left-wing of the PSR.

Argunov (Voronovich), A.A. (1867–1939)
came from noble stock; railroad employee and professional revolutionary; studied at the University of Moscow; founded 1894–96 the "Union of Socialist Revolutionaries" in Saratov; wrote the programmatic brochure "Nashi zadachi" in 1898; directed the "Northern Alliance of Socialist Revolutionaries"; published in 1900–01 the first three numbers of "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia"; was arrested 1901 in Tomsk and banned to Siberia (Iakutsk); returned in 1905 to St. Petersburg; was elected to the party central committee by the first party congress; aside from a short prison sentence in 1907, he served until the outbreak of the First World War as one of the most important organizers in the PSR leadership outside of Russia; during the First World War Argunov was among the "Defenders of the Fatherland"; in 1917 he was one of the central figures of the right wing and editor of the "Volia Naroda"; in 1918 Argunov emigrated to Czechoslovakia.

Avksent'ev, N.D. (1878–1943)
came from noble stock; son of a lawyer from Penza; studied at Moscow University; expelled from the university in 1899 because of his role as chairman of the "Council of unified zemliachestva"; continued his education in Berlin, Leipzig, and Halle in the years 1900–1904; received his doctorate with the new Kantian philosopher A. Riehl; in 1905 he was a well-known speaker in the factories of St. Petersburg and a member of the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Workers' Soviet; from then on he was an important member of the PSR leadership; after a short period of banishment and flight, he was coopted in 1907 into the Central Committee and elected editor of the "Znamia Truda"; in 1911/12 Avksent'ev was one of the initiators of "Pochin"; after 1914 he stood with the patriots; in 1917, as leader of the right wing, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Workers' Soviet, Chairman of the All Russian Peasant Soviet, Interior Minister of the Provisional Government (July–August), and finally Chairman of the Parliament from February to October; he left Russia in 1918 and died in the USA.

Azef, E.F. (1869–1918)
son of a poor Jewish handworker; studied engineering in Darmstadt and Karlsruhe at the beginning of the 1890s; during this period he made contact with foreign neo-populist groups and at the same time he began his service with the political police; in 1899 he joined the "Northern Alliance of Socialist Revolutionaries"; in 1903 he became Gershuni's successor as head of the "Battle Organization" of the PSR; organized the assassinations of the Interior Minister V.K. fon Pleve (July 1904) and the Grand Prince Sergej Aleksandrovich (February 1905); he belonged to the inner circle of the Central Committee; in December 1908 Azef was exposed as a police spy and after a successful flight he settled as a businessman in Berlin.

Bakh, A.N. (1857–1946)
son of a Jewish technician from the province of Poltava; studied at the mathematical-physical faculty of the University of Kiev; because of his participation in the revolutionary movement he was arrested and banished in 1878; joined "Narodnaia Volia"; from 1883 on he lived illegally as an agitator in south Russia; in 1885 emigrated to France, the USA and Switzerland; was a member of the "Fund for a Free Russian Press"; participated 1900–01 in the founding of the PSR although as an opponent of terrorism he joined the party formally only in 1905; secretary of the Foreign Committee; in 1909 elected by the fifth party council to be chairman of the investigation committee looking into the Azef affair; in 1914 he stood with the "Defenders of the Fatherland"; returned to Russia in 1917 and broke with the PSR in 1918. In the 1920s Bakh was one of the Soviet Union's leading chemists; was named in 1929 a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and was honored in 1945 as a "Hero of Socialist Labor."

Bilit, B.G. (1864–?)
son of a Jewish grain trader from Odessa; was forced to leave grammar school early; in 1884 arrested because of membership in "Narodnaia Volia" and put under observation of the authorities; in 1889 emigrated and settled in Paris and Geneva; became a chemistry teacher in

a grammar school; joined the PSR in 1900; helped the "Battle Organization" with the technical preparation for assassinations; but after 1905 he was known as an energetic critic of terror; from 1911 on he belonged to the party right wing around "Pochin" and "Izvestiia Zagranichnogo Oblastnogo Komiteta"; 1932 Bilit returned to the Soviet Union.

Bonch-Osmolovskii, A.O. (1857–1928)
nobleman from an old White-Russian family; joined the "Zemlia i Volia" in 1876 in St. Petersburg and then "Chernyi peredel"; 1900 belonged to Gershuni's "Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia" in Minsk and in the same year arrested and banished to Siberia for five years; was among the founders of the "Ural's Union of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries" in Ufa; at the beginning of 1905 he returned to European Russia; was coopted in the PSR Central Committee and elected to the Oblast committee of the North West Oblast; took a leading role in the "All Russian Peasant Union"; participated in the December unrest in Moscow and belonged to the editorial board of "Zemlia i Volia." After 1907 Bonch-Osmolovskii pursued revolutionary agitation, primarily on his posessions in Blon', and was called to account for his actions in a spectacular trial in 1910–11.

Breshko-Breshkovskaia, E.K. (1844–1934)
came from noble stock; daughter of a senior lieutenant; as a supporter of Bakunin she participated in the "Movement to the People"; was sentenced in 1877 in the "Trial of the 193" and banished to Siberia; returned to European Russia in 1896; in 1899 joined the "Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia" in Minsk and together with Gershuni her work was decisive for the building up of the socialist revolutionary party organization in Russia. In 1903 Breshko-Breshkovskaia convened the founding congress of the PSR's foreign organization and was the representative of the inner Russian Central Committee for the exiles. After a triumphal tour through the USA she returned in 1905 to Russia (above all Saratov) and dedicated herself to revolutionary work; arrested in 1907 and sentenced in 1910 to life banishment (in Iakutsk). In 1917 she belonged to the right wing of the PSR; in 1918 member of the "Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly" and emigrated in 1919 to Paris, later to the USA.

Chernov, V.M. (1873–1952)
he joined populist circles assembled around V.A. Balmashev and M.A. Natanson in his hometown Saratov in the 1880s; arrested in 1894 because of membership in the "Party of People's Rights"; in 1898–99 pursued together with S.N. Sletov agitation of the peasants in the province of Tambov and convened the first "Peasant Brotherhoods"; through a series of philosophical articles in "Russkoe Bogatstvo" he became known as an extremely talented student of Mikhailovskii; emigrated in 1899 to Paris; was influential in the founding of the "Agrarian Socialist League" (1900) and the PSR (1901/02); together with M.R. Gots he assumed the editorship of "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia" in Geneva (1902) and became known as a leading theorist of the new party; Chernov published the PSR program in 1904; in 1906 elected to the Central Committee and was its most prominent member until 1909. After the discovery of Azef he largely withdrew from politics and dedicated himself to theoretical questions in the

columns of "Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner" (from 1910) and "Zavety" (from 1912); 1914 Chernov stood with the Internationalists and 1915 took part in the Zimmerwald Conference; 1917 he led the left party center and was in May–August the Agriculture Minister of the Provisional Government; assumed in January 1918 the chairmanship of the Constituent Assembly and in summer 1918 the chairmanship of the "Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly" in Ufa; he refused to cooperate closely with the White generals and had to emigrate after the Civil War; in exile in Prague in the 1920s he worked on questions of socialist theory ("constructive socialism"); after 1945 he settled in the USA and died in New York.

Feit, A.Iu. (1864–1926)
of German origin; son of a medical doctor from the province of St. Petersburg; studied medicine in St. Petersburg; took part in student unrest and was placed under observation of the authorities; from the end of the 1890s he worked as a doctor in Khar'kov; arrested in 1894 because of membership in the "Group of Narodovol'tsy" around M.S. Ol'minskii and banished to Siberia; joined the PSR in Chita; returned 1905 to European Russia; for a short time he directed the Socialist Revolutionary committee from Nizhnii-Novgorod; coopted into the Central Committee and elected to the Executive Committee of the Workers and Soldiers Soviets in St. Petersburg. 1906 he was, along with this Committee, arrested and sent to Siberia. After a successful flight he settled in Paris, where he belonged to the central leadership and intermittently to the PSR's "Foreign Delegation of the Central Committee"; he participated in the First World War as a volunteer doctor for France. In 1917 he was close to the Central Committee. During the Civil War he at first fought in Denikin's army, then withdrew from politics and dedicated himself to scientific and medical work.

Fundaminskii, I.I. (1881–1942)
(pseudonym Bunakov); son of a rich Jewish merchant from Moscow; studied philosophy in 1900–04 together with N.D. Avksent'ev, V.M. Zenzinov and A.R. Gots in Heidelberg and Halle; New-Kantian; talented theorist and speaker; at the beginning of 1905 he joined the Moscow Committee of the PSR and during the 1905 revolution became known as an agitator; the fifth party council elected him in 1909 to the foreign delegation of the Central Committee; in 1911 he was one of the initiators of the "Pochin" Group; in 1914 he stood with the "Defenders of the Fatherland" and in 1917 he was one of the leaders of the right wing.

Gedeonovskii, A.V. (1859–1928)
son of a priest from the province of Orel; went to a seminary; in 1876 joined the "Zemlia i Volia" and in 1880 "Narodnaia Volia"; in 1882 and again in 1886 put under surveillance by the authorities; joined Natanson's "Party of the People's Rights" in 1893; arrested in 1894 and banished to Siberia; after his return in 1900 he came into close contact with the founders of the PSR; in 1904 he was representative of the inner Russian Central Committee in Odessa; in 1905–06 worked in the socialist revolutionary committees in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Voronezh, Nizhnii-Novgorod and Khar'kov; took part in the first party conference in Imatra; emigrated 1906 to Paris and there was one of the leaders of the PSR's foreign organ-

ization. In 1917 he was elected to the Moscow City Duma and held a leading position in the co-operative movement (Tsentrosoiuz).

Gershuni, G.A. (1870–1908)
son of a peasant from the province of Kovno; Jewish; in 1885–88 apprentice pharmacist; from 1889 worked as a pharmacist and newspaper proofreader in St. Petersburg; studied in Kiev pharmacy from 1895; arrested because of his participation in student unrest; opened in 1898 a chemical-bacteriological institute in Minsk and organized a political circle that became the "Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia"; Gershuni initiated the merger of the Russian and exile socialist revolutionary circles in the winter of 1901–02; in 1902 he founded the "Battle Organization" and prepared the assassination of the Interior Minister D.S. Sipiagin; after his arrest (1903) he was sentenced to death, pardoned but to life-long forced labor and in 1905 banished to Siberia; in 1906 he escaped through China and the USA; in 1907 he took part in the PSR's second party conference. One of the great political strengths of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Gershuni died in 1908 in Zurich.

Gots, A.R. (1882–1940?)
son of a rich Jewish merchant from Moscow and the brother of M.R. Gots; studied philosophy in 1900–1904 together with N.D. Avksent'ev, V.M. Zenzinov and I.I. Fundaminskii in Halle and Heidelberg; had contact from 1901 with A.A. Argunov's "Northern Alliance" and the exile leadership of the PSR in Geneva; belonged in 1905 to the Moscow Committee; joined in 1906 the "Battle Organization" and took part in the preparations for the assassination of Interior Minister P.N. Durnovo; arrested in 1906; in 1907 sentenced to eight years forced labor; in 1917 Gots directed the socialist revolutionary faction of the St. Petersburg Soviet, later the All Russian Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet and was held to be the leader of the party's right center. After the October Revolution he took part in organizing anti-bolshevik resistance and was sentenced in 1922 in the trial of the PSR. According to Soviet accounts, he worked after his release from 1927 to 1940 in the administration of the Gouvernement Simbirsk; according to V.M. Zenzinov, he was shot in Alma Ata in 1937.

Gots, M.R. (1866–1906)
son of a rich Jewish merchant from Moscow; studied medicine and law at Moscow University; joined "Narodnaia Volia" in 1884; in 1885 belonged to its Moscow Committee; in 1886 arrested and 1888 banished to Siberia; in 1895 pardoned; settled in Paris in 1900; together with I.A. Rubanovich and N.S. Rusanov published "Vestnik Russkoi Revoliutsii"; from 1901–02 he was one of the architects of the PSR; together with V.M. Chernov he published, starting in 1900, the central party paper "Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia" in Geneva. Although he was hindered by severe illness, Gots was the organizational center of the socialist revolutionary groups outside of Russia.

Iudelevskii, I.L. (1868–?)
"meshchanin" of Jewish origin from the province of Grodno; studied at the physical-mathematical faculty of St. Petersburg University; arrested in 1900 because of membership in a "ter-

rorist" circle in St. Petersburg and sentenced to five years banishment; in 1908 published the "Revoliutsionnaia Mysl'" and was the leading theorist of the neo-maximalist "Paris Group of Socialist Revolutionaries."

Kraft, P.P. (1870–1907)
son of a high official from Kaluga; studied in Moscow; in 1888 joined one of the last circles of the "Narodnaia Volia"; arrested in 1889 and sentenced to three years in prison; from 1892 he pursued revolutionary agitation in south Russia; toward the end of the 1890s he led a socialist revolutionary group in Penza; in 1900–02 belonged to the first inner Russian central group of the PSR in Saratov and, as G.A. Gershuni's closest aide, had an important role in the construction of the socialist revolutionary organization; in 1902 taken into custody in Kiev and sentenced to three years arrest. During the years of revolution he was active in the underground and belonged, among others, to the Oblast-Committee of the Northern Oblast as well as the Central Committee's Organization Bureau.

Lazarev, E.E. (1855–?)
son of a serf from the province of Samara; attended grammar school at Samara; took part in 1874 in the "Movement to the People"; in 1877 involved in the "Trial of the 193" but found not guilty; founded in 1897 a circle of "Narodnaia Volia" in Samara; in 1884 arrested and banished to Chita; fled in 1890 to the USA; returned in 1894 to Europe and was secretary to the "Fund for a Free Russian Press" in London; from the middle of the 1890s he lived as a farmer in Switzerland; 1900 participated in the founding of the "Agrarian Socialist League"; formally joined the PSR in 1902 and since then he belonged to the closest circle of the foreign leadership; in 1904 he represented his party at the Congress of the Second Socialist International in Amsterdam. During the years of revolution he dedicated himself in St. Petersburg and above all in the province of Samara to revolutionary activity; 1911 arrested and banished to Siberia; 1917 he was member of the Peasant Soviet of Samara, the All Russian Peasant Soviet as well as the Constituent Assembly and, as Minister of Education; in 1918 belonged to the "Government of the Members of the Constituent Assembly in Samara"; in 1919 he emigrated via Prague to the USA.

Lebedev, B.N. (1883–?)
(pseudonym "Voronov"), son of a high official; attended the University of Kazan'; 1904 placed undersurveillance by the authorities; since 1906 he directed the Raion Committee of the Narva district in St. Petersburg; 1908 arrested and banished to Tobol'sk but fled in the same year and emigrated to Paris; from 1909 on the party leadership's specialist on workers' questions and in the same year he was elected to the Central Committee by the fifth party council; in 1911 he joined the "Pochin" Group and was regarded as one of the leading representatives of the right wing.

Lebedev, V.I. (1883–1956)
son of a senior army medical doctor from the Caucasus; attended a military school; 1904 took part in the war against Japan; 1906 joined the PSR's Officers' nion; September 1907

was one of the organizers of the revolt in Sevastopol'; emigrated 1908 and published together with F.V. Volkhovskii the socialist revolutionary soldiers' paper "Za Narod." During the First World War he served as a volunteer in the French Army and joined 1917 the party's right wing. He was editor of the "Volia Rossii", and from April till August he was Navy Minister in the Provisional Government and finally in August deputy to the Governor General of the St. Petersburg Military District. After the October revolt he was one of the leading organizers of the anti-bolshevik resistance; emigrated 1919 to Paris, then to Prague, and finally in 1936 to the USA.

Leonovich, V.V. (1875–?)
came from noble stock; in 1898 banished to Siberia; in 1900–1903 he directed together with A.O. Bonch-Osmolovskii and E.S. Sazonov the socialist revolutionary groups in Ufa; in 1903 arrested in connection with the assassination of the Governor N.M. Bogdanovich; in 1904–1905 was active as a professional revolutionary in Samara, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Samara, Saratov and Odessa; thereafter he belonged to the inner Russian Central Committee; worked on the preparation committee of the first party committee; in 1906 was the Central Committee's plenipotentiary for the Central Oblast and appears to have been member of the PSR's St. Petersburg Committee. After 1907 he emigrated and assumed duties in the Foreign Delegation of the Central Committee and the committees of the Foreign Organization.

Mikhalevich, S.F. (ca. 1855–1911)
joined "Zemlia i Volia" at the end of the 1870s; arrested and banished to Siberia (Iakutsk); returned in 1905 to St. Petersburg and the Central Committee gave him the task of directing the agitation of the army; at the end of 1906 he founded the "All Russian Officer's Union" as well as the "All Russian Union of Soldiers and Sailors" and published the paper "Narodnaia Armiia"; in 1907 participated in terrorist activities, arrested and again banished to Iakutsk. In 1909 he fled to St. Petersburg where he was quickly arrested by the Okhrana; 1911 sentenced and executed.

Minor, O.S. (1861–1932?)
son of a rabbi from Minsk; studied in Iaroslavl' and Moscow; in 1883 worked together with M.R. Gots in a circle of "Narodnaia Volia"; in 1885 arrested and banished to Sibiria; returned at the end of the 1890s and emigrated in 1902 to Berlin; through Gots he joined the PSR and thereafter he belonged to the socialist revolutionary foreign leadership in Geneva. During the years of revolution he served as special agent of the Central Committee; in 1905 he was sent to the Caucasus to reorganize the party there; in 1906 sent to White Russia and the Ukraine for the same purpose; in 1907 as emissary of the party leadership he visited some of the committees in the Caucasus as well as St. Petersburg. In the Central Committee he was responsible for "propaganda and agitation" in Russia. 1908 he was responsible for renewing the Oblast-Organization of the Volga Oblast and at the beginning of 1909 he was arrested due to a tip from Azef. In 1917 he returned from Siberian banishment and was elected to the Moscow City Duma and the Constituent Assembly; participated in the anti-bolshevik resistance after the October revolt; in 1919 emigrated to the USA, later resettled to Prague.

Natanson, M.A. (1850–1919)
son of a merchant; attended the St. Petersburg medical-surgical academy; in 1869 organized with N.V. Chaikovskii an early Populist-Revolutionary circle; in 1872 expelled and sentenced to three year's banishment; 1876 was one of the founders of "Zemlia i Volia"; 1877 arrested and banished to Siberia till 1889; 1893 founded the "Party of People's Rights" in Saratov; 1894 again arrested and sentenced to ten years banishment; returned 1905 to European Russia; joined the PSR and was elected by the first party conference to the Central Committee. Even in exile Natanson was one of the central members of the socialist revolutionary leadership and was especially responsible for organization and the party treasury. 1914 he held to an internationalist position and 1915–16 participated in the conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal. 1917 he belonged to the party left wing and was one of the founders of the "Party of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries."

Potapov, A.I. (1869–1915)
(pseudonym "Rudin"); medical doctor from Moscow; member of "Narodnaia Volia"; arrested and banished for two years to Siberia; became known to the public with articles to "Russkoe Bogatstvo" and "Obrazovanie"; since 1903 belonged to the inner Russian leadership of the PSR and made himself a name for the agrarian question; 1906–07 belonged to the Organization Bureau of the Central Committee and was for many years one of the work horses of the Moscow Committee. Due to the treason of Z.F. Zhuchenko, Potapov was arrested and banished to Astrakhan'. After a short period as an emigrant, he worked as a doctor in 1914–15 in Moscow.

Rakitnikov, N.I. (1864–?)
(pseudonym, "Maksimov"); son of a peasant; in 1886 ended his study of law at the University of St. Petersburg; in 1888 banished to Vologda because of the possession of illegal literature; settled towards the end of the 1890s in Saratov and founded together with A.P. Bulanov, A.I. Al'tovskii and others an important socialist revolutionary group that in 1902 assumed the function of a Central Committee; after a short prison sentence he was active in the PSR and in the All Russian Peasant Union. In 1906 he was elected to the Central Committee by the first party conference and remained a member from that time on. Rakitnikov made a name for himself not only as a representative of a moderate maximalist course but also became the best known socialist revolutionary politician after Chernov. After Azef was discovered to be an Okhrana spy he was compelled along with the other Central Committee members to resign but he held his office as editor of "Znamia Truda" and he became the most energetic proponent of orthodox socialist revolutionary theory and tactics in the conflict with the left and right opposition. In 1917 he belonged to the left center and served from May till August as Chernov's deputy in the Agriculture Ministry of the Provisional Government and was one of the best-known members of the Central Committee. February 1919 he argued for cooperation with the Bol'sheviki ("Agreement of Ufa") and, after the Central Committee refused this course, participated in the foundation of the group "Narod", which soon called itself the "Party of the Socialist Revolutionary Minority", left the PSR and was prepared to conditionally support the new Soviet government.

Rubanovich, I.A. (1859–1922)
Son of a Jewish medical assistent from Odessa; studied with honors at the physical-mathematical faculty of the University of Odessa; in 1879 joined the "Narodnaia Volia"; in 1881 arrested; after his freedom was bought he emigrated to Paris, became a French citizen and later chemistry professor at the Sorbonne. Rubanovich had close contacts with the best-known populist exiles, namely P.L. Lavrov, L.A. Tikhomirov and M.N. Oshanina-Polonskaia; at the beginning of the 1890s he joined the "Group of the Old Narodovol'tsy"; member of the French Socialist Party; belonged to the initiators of the "Agrarian Socialist League"; in 1901 published together with N.S. Rusanov the "Vestnik Russkoi Revoliutsii" and in the same year formally joined the PSR; Rubanovich was the "Foreign Minister" (Chernov) of the neo-populist movement; edited after 1904 the "Tribune Russe" (a PSR paper especially directed at foreign countries) and since the Congress of the Second Socialist International in Amsterdam, he held the office of the permanent deputy of his party in the bureau of the Second Socialist International. In the factional conflicts after 1907 he held to a clear anti-terrorist position and stood with the "Defenders of the Fatherland" in 1914. 1917 he returned to Russia and was elected in the Executive Committee of the All Russian Peasant Soviet; August 1917 sent again as official PSR representative out of Russia. He died in Berlin.

Rudnev, V.V. (1879–1940)
came from a well-to-do Moscow family; studied medicine in Germany from 1901 on and belonged to the socialist revolutionary circle of friends around N.D. Avksent'ev, I.I. Fundaminskii, A.R. Gots, V.M. Zenzinov and others. In 1905 he returned to Russia in order to do revolutionary work; within a short time he became known as one of the most capable and popular members of the PSR Moscow organization; he represented his party in the Executive Committee of the Moscow Workers' Soviet; in 1906 he was a delegate of the Moscow organization to the first PSR party conference; named by the new Central Committee to be plenipotentiary for organizational questions in St. Petersburg; in 1907 responsible for the relations between the Central Committee in Russia and the Organizational Bureau in Paris. He lived in Iakutsk in Siberia since 1909. In 1914 he was one of the "Defenders of the Fatherland"; in 1917 mayor of Moscow; in 1918 fought with anti-bolshevik units and left Russia.

Savinkov, B.V. (1879–1925)
came from nobel stock; was compelled to leave the University of St. Petersburg due to his participation in student unrest; continued his education in Berlin and Heidelberg; in 1902 was called to account because of social democratic activity and banished to Siberia; after his flight in 1903 he was convinced by E.K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia to join the PSR; upon the recommendation of M.R. Gots he joined the "Battle Organization"; after Azef, Savinkov became the second man of socialist revolutionary terror; he played a significant role in the murder of Interior Minister V.K. fon Pleve (1904) and Grand Prince Sergei Aleksandrovich (1905); he won great fame by his spectacular flight out of the prison in Sevastopol' (1906) and his autobiographical novels "The Pale Horse" (1909) and "As if it never was" (1912); journalist and French volunteer in the First World War; in 1917 he worked as Army Commissar and deputy

War Minister in the Provisional Government under A.F. Kerenskii; because of his questionable role in the Kornilov Putsch he was thrown out of the PSR. After the October revolt he was a leading figure in the anti-bolshevik resistance and he left Russia after the defeat of the White Army. In 1924 he decided to reenter the Soviet Union illegally in order to work against the regime. He was arrested crossing the border and probably committed suicide in prison.

Shishko, L.E. (1852–1910)
came from a noble family; beginning in 1868 he visited a military academy and 1871 a technological institute; during this period he joined the Chaikovskii Circle; in 1874 he participated in the "Movement to the People" and was sentenced in the "Trial of the 193" to nine years forced labor for his efforts; in 1890 he returned and emigrated to France. He co-founded the "Fund for a Free Russian Press" (1891) and was one of the initiators of the "Agrarian Socialist League" (1900). He joined the PSR only in 1904 but was from the very beginning one of the leaders outside of Russia and was one of the most influential "stariki."

Sletov, S.N. (1876–1915)
came from nobel stock; son of a rich landowner from the Gouvernement Tambov; studied since 1894 in the natural science faculty of Moscow University; in 1897 banished for three years to Ufa because of political activity in the student zemliachestva but due to the intervention of his father he was able to return to Tambov in the same year and was placed under surveillance by the authorities; together with V.M. Chernov he organized the first "Peasant Brotherhoods in Tambov"; in 1899 he was again accused of political opposition because of the "Peasant Brotherhoods" and emigrated. Sletov was a committed supporter of an anti-terrorist, democratic policy that was largely concentrated on the agrarian masses; he took part in the negotiations over establishing the party and discussions over the party platform. In 1902–04 he was active in Kiev and Odessa as an illegal and organized especially the transport of literature. As an opponent of a policy of centralized terror independent from the Central Committee he was betrayed to the Okhrana by E.F. Azef and arrested on 4 September 1904. From October 1905 he held a leading position in the PSR's Kiev Committee; in December 1905 he took part in the Moscow revolt and was coopted in January 1906 into the Central Committee. In protest against the isolation of the party leadership from the periphery he resigned his post in February 1907 and decided to return to work at the grassroots in the Moscow Committee. After his arrest and flight in spring 1907 he emigrated; for a time he worked as I.A. Rubanovich's representative in the bureau of the Second Socialist International and dedicated himself to organizational problems in the exile leadership in Paris. 1911 he was sent to Russia as plenipotentiary of the Central Committee in order to inspect the condition of the socialist revolutionary groups. The results of this inspection led him to resign again and to join the "Pochin" circle. 1914 Sletov declared for the party of the "Defenders of the Fatherland." He was killed in 1915 as a French volunteer.

Tiutchev, N.S. (1856–1924)
son of a high official from an old noble family; studied medicine in St. Petersburg since 1875; in 1876 joined "Zemlia i Volia"; arrested in 1878 and banished to Siberia; returned to European Russia in 1892 and founded together with M.A. Natanson the "Party of People's

Rights"; in 1894 arrested again; after his banishment he joined the PSR 1904; 1905 took part in the preparations for the assassination of Governor-General D.F. Trepov and in summer 1905 was sent as the plenipotentiary of the Central Committee (which at this time was still in Russia) to Geneva. He remained an emigrant until 1914 and was one of the most important PSR leaders. 1917 he belonged to the PSR's right wing around the "Volia Naroda" but he was political not very well known and dedicated himself primarily to his work in the Historical Revolutionary Archive in Petrograd. After 1923 Tiutchev belonged to the editorial board of the newspaper "Katorga i ssylka." He died in Leningrad.

Volkhovskii, F.V. (1846–1914)
nobleman from the province of Poltava; studied law at Moscow University from 1863; since 1867 participated in the revolutionary movement; in 1869–70 was one of the founders of the Chaikovskii Circle; arrested and in 1877 banished to Siberia in the "Trial of the 193"; in 1889 fled Siberia through Vladivostok and the USA to Europe; settled in 1890 in London; belonged to the founders of the "Fund for a Free Russian Press" and in 1900 to the initiators of the "Agrarian Socialist League" and the PSR. Volkhovskii officially joined the new party relatively late (circa 1904), but afterwards he was one of the most active leaders. He especially dedicated himself to journalism; worked in the editorial board of the "Znamia Truda" and together with V.I. Lebedev he published the soldiers' newspaper "Za narod." He died in London.

Zenzinov, V.M. (1880–1953)
son of a rich merchant, "hereditary honorary citizen" and "Commercial Councillor" from Moscow; as a young student at the end of the 1880s he was warned by the Okhrana for distributing revolutionary literature; studied from 1900 philosophy in Berlin, Halle and Heidelberg and belonged together with N.D. Avksent'ev, I.I. Fundaminskii, A.R. Gots and others to the circle of the "German-Socialist Revolutionaries"; in 1904 he returned to Russia and was given the task by the foreign leadership of rebuilding the Moscow organization; in December 1905 he was one of the decisive supporters of the armed uprising; joined the "Battle Organization" in January 1906 and took part in the preparations for the assassination of Admiral F.V. Dubasov; arrested in September 1906 and in summer 1907 banished to Iakutsk; fled Iakutsk in the same year over Japan to Europe; 1907–08 he was active in the socialist revolutionary organization in exile; in 1909 elected to the Central Committee and sent to Russia to undertake revolutionary work; at the beginning of 1910 he was arrested and again sent to Siberia; in 1915 he returned to Moscow. In 1917 he was one of the most active politicians of the PSR right center. He belonged to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Workers' Soviet, the editorial board of the central party paper "Delo Naroda" as well as the Constituent Assembly. In 1918 he participated in the "Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly in Samara"; in September, together with N.D. Avksent'ev, he also joined the White opposition government, the "Directorate", which was elected in Ufa. After Kolchak's putsch in Omsk he was banished to China; early in 1919 he emigrated from China through the USA to Paris, later to Berlin, Prague and New York.

Arbeiten zur Geschichte Osteuropas

herausgegeben von
Prof. Dr. Hans Hecker (Düsseldorf),
Prof. Dr. Frank Kämpfer
und Prof. Dr. Lothar Maier (Münster)

Lothar Maier (Hrsg.)
Expansion und Selbstbehauptung
Rußlands Großmachtpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert
Mit dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion wird das koloniale Erbe Rußlands wieder sichtbar. Der Tschetschenien-Konflikt verweist auf den Kaukasus und damit auf eines der Kolonialgebiete, die noch immer zu Rußland gehören.
Zahlreiche andere koloniale Eroberungen des 19. Jahrhunderts haben ihre Selbständigkeit wieder erlangt.
Der vorliegende Band stellt erstmals die russische Expansion zusammenhängend dar. Er beschäftigt sich sowohl mit den Eigenheiten des russischen Kolonialismus als auch mit der Stellung Rußlands im Spiel mit den anderen Großmächten.
Bd. 1, Frühjahr 2000, 320 S., 38,80 DM, br.,
ISBN 3-8258-2503-5.

Thomas Reißer
Menschewismus und Nep
Diskussion einer demokratischen Alternative
Bd. 2, 1997, 267 S., 58,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-2708-9

Carola Tischler
Flucht in die Verfolgung
Deutsche Emigranten im sowjetischen Exil – 1933 bis 1945 –
"So wie früher Paris Zufluchtsort und Schule für die revolutionären Vertreter des aufstrebenden Bürgertums war, so erweist sich heute Moskau als Zufluchtsort und Schule für die revolutionären Vertreter des aufsteigenden Proletariats."
Dieser 1935 in einem Sammelband über Moskau zitierte Ausspruch Stalins galt auch für einige tausend deutsche Kommunisten sowie eine Reihe von deutschen Juden, die vor dem Terror im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland flüchteten. Die Schule, durch die sie in der Sowjetunion gingen, war allerdings hart. Sie konnte Haft und Tod, Erniedrigung und Entbehrung, aber auch Lebensrettung und Solidarität bedeuten.
Bd. 3, 1997, 288 S., 48,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-3034-9

Andreas Purkl
Die Lettlandpolitik der Weimarer Republik
Studien zu den deutsch-lettischen Beziehungen der Zwischenkriegszeit
Nachdem Lettland 1991 seine Unabhängigkeit wiedererlangt hat, kommt Deutschland eine besondere Rolle bei der Integration der baltischen Repulik in Europa zu. Auf welche Tradition der Zwischenkriegszeit kann dabei aufgebaut werden? Hat die Weimarer Republik eine Lettlandpolitik der friedlichen Koexistenz betrieben oder die kaiserliche Machtpolitik im Baltikum fortgeführt? Wie gestaltete sich der Übergang zur NS-Ostpolitik, die wesentlich zum Verlust der Unabhängigkeit Lettlands beitrug?
Bd. 4, 1997, 376 S., 59,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-3201-5

Hans Georg Peyerle
Journey to Moscow
Beschreibung der moßcouitterischen Rayß, Welche ich Hanns Georg Peyerle von Augspurg mit herrn Andreasen Nathan und Matheo Bernhardt Manlichen dem Jüngern, Ady 19 Marty Ao 1606 von Crachaw aus, angefangen, und was wir wahrhafftiges gehört, gesehen, und erfahren, alles aufs khürzest beschriben, bis zue unserer Gott lob wider dahin ankunft den 15 Decembris Anno 1608. Edited, translated and annotated by G. Edward Orchard
Hans Georg Peyerle was an Augsburg jewel merchant allured to Moscow by the prospect of handsome profits on the occasion of the False Dmitry's marriage to Maryna Mniszech in May 1606. Instead he was caught up in the bloody events following the overthrow of the pretender and spent the next nineteen months as a virtual prisoner in the compound of the Polish ambassadors.
Peyerle has left us a detailed account of his ordeal, including rare reportage of the diplomatic exchanges between the ambassadors and the new government of Tsar Vasily Ivanovich Shuisky.
Bd. 5, 1997, 184 S., 48,80 DM, gb., ISBN 3-8258-3415-8

Volker Blomeier
Litauen in der Zwischenkriegszeit
Skizze eines Modernisierungskonflikts
Die Situation Litauens in der Zwischenkriegszeit kennzeichnete eine Fülle unterschiedlicher innen- und außenpolitischer Herausforderungen: die eigene Unabhängigkeit verdankte es lediglich glücklichen Umständen, über seine historische Hauptstadt Wilna lag es mit Polen, über das Memelland mit dem Deutschen Reich im Streit; eine nationalistisch gestimmte öffentliche Meinung beengte den Handlungsspielraum der Regierungen; die westeuropäischen Vorbildern entlehnte Verfassung war den tatsächlichen Verhältnissen in keiner

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Weise angemessen, die Agrarstruktur überholt. Unter den Parteien herrschte Uneinigkeit über den zu beschreitenden Weg im Innern wie über die außenpolitische Orientierung.
All dies stand jedoch nicht unverbunden im Raum, sondern ist aus einem Ursprung zu erklären. Politische, wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Veränderungen im Innern waren die eine Seite des in der Zwischenkriegszeit beschleunigt voranschreitenden Modernisierungsprozesses, der in den – letztlich gescheiterten – außenpolitischen Erwartungen zum Tragen kommende Nationalismus die andere. Es gelang der litauischen Führung bis zur Annexion des Landes durch die Sowjetunion 1940 jedoch nie, beide Tendenzen aufeinander abzustimmen.
Bd. 6, 1998, 296 S., 59,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-3661-4

Christian Raitz von Frentz
A Lesson Forgotten
Minority Protection under the League of Nations. The Case of the German Minority in Poland, 1920–1934
"The problem of how to protect minorities is an old one which has lost none of its relevance. This impressive study of the [MPS] of the League of Nations in relation to the German minority in Poland illuminates a classic example of the problem: the conflict between a new nation state and a previously powerful minority supported by an outside power, and at another level the conflict between a sovereign state and an international organization charged with upholding minority rights. Dr. Frentz has made use of the extensive collection of minority petitions from the League of Nations' archive to produce an account that is both balanced and absorbing."
Jonathan R. C. Wright, Christ Church, University of Oxford
"With Europe once again seeing a revival of intense ethnic conflict, this is a very timely and welcome book. Based on very thorough research, it addresses many of the key issues raised by minority problems today and provides a shrewd assessment of the complexities involved in solving them. It ought to be required reading for members of international agencies involved in the Balkan crisis.
Jeremy D. Noakes, University of Exeter
Bd. 8, 2000, 312 S., 79,80 DM, gb., ISBN 3-8258-4472-2

Osteuropa: Geschichte, Wirtschaft, Politik
herausgegeben von Wolfgang Eichwede, Frank Golczewski und Günter Trautmann

Gabriele Clemens (Hrsg.)
Die Integration der mittel- und osteuropäischen Staaten in die Europäische Union
Aus Sicht verschiedener wissenschaftlicher Disziplinen werden in diesem Sammelband die mit der Integration der mittel- und osteuropäischen Staaten in die Europäische Union verbundenen Probleme und Anforderungen für die MOEL wie für die EU betrachtet. Thematisiert werden u. a. die Beziehungen zwischen den MOEL und den westeuropäischen Staaten vor den tiefgreifenden politischen Veränderungen seit 1989, die Europaabkommen, die wirtschaftliche "Beitrittsreife" der beitrittswilligen Länder, die Probleme auf dem Landwirtschafts- und Ernährungssektor im Rahmen des Integrationsprozesses sowie Entwicklung und Stand des Demokratisierungsprozesses und der Rechtsreform und Rechtsangleichung in Mittel- und Osteuropa.
Bd. 1, Frühjahr 2000, 272 S., 39,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-4339-4

Regina Heller
Russische Interessen im Balkankonflikt
Rußland und die internationale Staatenwelt seit 1992
Die politische Strategie Rußlands gegenüber den Kooperationsbündnissen der internationalen Staatengemeinschaft im Balkankonflikt folgte keiner kontinuierlichen Linie, sondern zeichnete sich durch ein Ausbalancieren unterschiedlicher Positionen aus. Die Ursachen hierfür liegen in der starken Wechselwirkung zwischen der russischen Innen- und Außenpolitik, in deren Folge verschiedene Interessen auf die Balkanpolitik Moskaus eingewirkt haben. Dabei stellt sich die Frage, inwieweit die Analyse der russischen Positionen im ehemaligen Jugoslawien für das Kooperationsvermögen Rußlands in anderen Bereichen der internationalen Zusammenarbeit herangezogen werden kann.
Bd. 20, 1998, 192 S., 39,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-3696-7

Eva Maria Hinterhuber
Die Soldatenmütter Sankt Petersburg
Zwischen Neotraditionalismus und neuer Widerständigkeit
Rußlands Soldatenmütter haben durch ihren Protest gegen die zahlreichen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in den rußländischen Streitkräften und vor allem

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durch ihren aktiven Widerstand gegen den Krieg in Tschetschenien internationales Aufsehen erregt. Die vorliegende Untersuchung ist die bislang einzige umfassende wissenschaftliche Antwort auf das Phänomen der Soldatenmütterorganisationen. Vor dem Hintergrund einer Analyse der innermilitärischen Situation in den rußländischen Streitkräften informiert das Buch anhand einer reichen Quellenbasis über Entstehung, Weltanschauung, Zielsetzungen, Aktionsformen und Erfolge der Soldatenmütterbewegung am Beispiel der Rechtsschutzorganisation der Soldatenmütter St. Petersburg. Auf theoretischer Ebene wird das Konzept der Zivilgesellschaft herangezogen, um das augenfällige Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Neotraditionalismus und neuer Widerständigkeit, in dem sich die Soldatenmütter bewegen, zu erklären.
Bd. 21, 1999, 160 S., 39,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-3932-x

Lars Jockheck
Der "Völkische Beobachter" über Polen 1932 – 1934
Eine Fallstudie zum Übergang vom "Kampfblatt" zur "Regierungszeitung"
Diese Studie untersucht in einer eingehenden quantitativen und qualitativen Analyse der mehr als tausend Artikel zum Thema 'Polen', die vom Juni 1932 bis März 1934 im 'Völkischen Beobachter' erschienen sind, wie sich die Berichterstattung im Laufe dieser entscheidenden Monate wandelte. Das Ergebnis widerspricht dem lange Zeit vorherrschenden Bild vom perfekten Zusammenspiel zwischen Propaganda und Politik im 'Dritten Reich'. Der 'Völkische Beobachter', das Zentralorgan der NSDAP, hat weder der überraschenden Wende in der deutschen Polenpolitik, die Adolf Hitler im Frühjahr 1933 einleitete, den Boden bereitet, noch hat es sie vorbehaltlos unterstützt. Bis die deutsch-polnische Annäherung Anfang 1934 vertragliche Grundlagen erhielt, berührten zahlreiche Artikel des 'Völkischen Beobachters' wieder und wieder so neuralgische Punkte im Verhältnis der beiden Länder wie die Grenzfrage und die Lage der deutschen Minderheit in Polen.
Bd. 22, 1999, 152 S., 39,90 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-4359-9

Elke Fein
Geschichtspolitik in Rußland
Chancen und Schwierigkeiten einer demokratisierenden Aufarbeitung der sowjetischen Vergangenheit am Beispiel der Tätigkeit der Gesellschaft MEMORIAL
Bd. 23, Frühjahr 2000, 248 S., 39,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-4416-1

Katja Tamchina
Die Europäische Union und Ungarn
Fortschritte und Hindernisse auf dem Weg zur Osterweiterung
Die bevorstehende Osterweiterung stellt für die Europäische Union die bislang größte Herausforderung in ihrer Geschichte dar. Bei keiner der vorherigen Erweiterungen hatte sie es mit so vielen Bewerbern auf einmal zu tun, deren Wohlstandsniveau zudem weit unter dem der meisten Unionsländer liegt. Ungarn verfolgt als eines der mittelosteuropäischen Länder zielstrebig seine Integration in die westeuropäischen politischen, wirtschaftlichen und militärischen Strukturen. Im März 1999 wurde es zusammen mit Polen und der Tschechischen Republik in die NATO aufgenommen; der Beitritt zur EU steht bekanntermaßen noch aus. Welche Fortschritte Ungarn auf dem Weg in die EU bereits zurückgelegt hat und welche Hindernisse von Ungarn, aber auch von seiten der Union noch überwunden werden müssen, bevor es zur Osterweiterung kommen kann, damit setzt sich der vorliegende Band aus der Reihe "Osteuropa, Geschichte, Wirtschaft, Politik" auseinander.
Bd. 24, 2000, 144 S., 34,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258 4541 9

Anne Sunder-Plaßmann
Rettung oder Massenmord?
Die Repressionen der Stalin-Ära in der öffentlichen Diskussion seit dem Beginn der Perestrojka
"Rettung" oder "Massenmord" – bis heute bewegt sich in Russland die öffentliche Diskussion um die Repressionen der Stalin-Ära zwischen diesen beiden Polen. Seit dem Beginn der Perestrojka wurde der Stalinismus zu einem der umstrittensten und politisiertesten Themen in der sowjetischen/russischen Öffentlichkeit.
Zunächst werden in dieser Arbeit die wesentlichen Positionen der Repressionsgegner und -befürworter herausgearbeitet. In einem weiteren Schritt geht es darum, die Wertesysteme der einzelnen Gruppen zu untersuchen. Als tertium comparationis werden Kategorien angelegt, die auf aufklärerisches Gedankengut zurückgehen, wie z.B. die Frage, ob Gewaltanwendung gegen Andersdenkende grundsätzlich für legitim gehalten wird oder nicht. Im Rahmen dieser Analyse können strukturelle Übereinstimmungen der verschiedenen Positionen und wertebezogene Allianzen von Gruppen aufgezeigt werden, die sich in ihrer Bewertung der stalinistischen Repressionen als Erzfeinde gegenüberstehen.
Bd. 25, 2000, 176 S., 34,80 DM, br., ISBN 3-8258-4619-9

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